

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF
CLEVERNESS

Vol. V

DECEMBER, 1901

No. 4

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Entered at New York Post-Office as second-class mail matter

Issued Monthly by Ess Ess Publishing Company, 1135 Broadway, New York

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WILLIAM GREEN, Printer, New York

HOW CHOPIN CAME TO REMSEN

By Edward S. Van Zile

CHOPIN'S OPUS 47

IT has been with the greatest reluctance that I have agreed to submit to the public all the details, so far as they are known to me, of my husband's seemingly miraculous change from an average man into a genius. Poor Tom! He was so happy as a phlegmatic, well-balanced, commonplace lawyer and clubman, devoted to his wife, his profession and his friends! But now, alas, his amazing eccentricities demand from me a presentation of his case that shall change censure into sympathy and malicious gossip into either silence or truth.

I am forced to admit at the outset that Tom is justified in attributing his present predicament to my own fondness for music. He had protested, gently but firmly, against the series of musicals that I had planned to give last season.

"They'll be an awful nuisance, my dear," he had remarked, gloomily, gazing at me appealingly across the table at which we were dining *en tête-à-tête*. "Why not substitute bridge whist in place of the music? Why will you insist on asking a lot of people who don't care a rap for anything but ragtime to listen to your high-priced soloists? A musical, Winifred, is both expensive and tiresome."

"What a Philistine you are, Tom!" I exclaimed, protestingly, knowing, however, that my dear old pachyderm would not wince at the epithet I had hurled at him across the board. Tom's vocabulary is not large,

and possesses a legal rather than a Biblical flavor.

"What's a Philistine?" he asked, indifferently. "If it's a fellow who objects to inviting a lot o' people that he doesn't like to listen to a lot o' playing and singing that *they* don't like, well, then, I'm it. But what's the use of my getting out an injunction? If you've made up your mind to give these musicals, Winifred, I might as well quash my appeal. I've no standing in this court."

One of the advantages of living with a man for ten years is that one is eventually confronted by a most fascinating problem. "Why did I marry him?" is a question that adds a keen zest to existence. We derive a new interest in life from the hope that the future may provide us with an answer to this query. I can remember now, to my sorrow, that I gazed across the table at Tom's heavy, immobile face, and longed for some radical, perhaps supernatural change in the man that should render him more congenial to me, more sympathetic, less practical, matter-of-fact, commonplace. A moment later I felt ashamed of myself for the disloyalty of my wish. It may be that subsequent events were preordained as a punishment to me for the internal discontent to which I had temporarily succumbed.

"Tom doesn't look quite fit, my dear," remarked Mrs. Jack Van Corlear to me early in the evening of my first—and last—musical. "Is he working too hard? Jack tells me that Tom has been made counsel for the Pepper and Salt Trust."

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"It's not that," I answered, lightly, glancing at Tom and noting the unusual pallor of his too fleshy face. "He's expecting an evening of torture, you know. He hates music. He can't tell a nocturne from a ballad—and they both torment him. But he's an awfully good fellow, isn't he? See, he's trying to talk to Signor Turino. I hope he'll remember that Verdi didn't write 'Lohengrin.' I've been coaching Tom for several days, but it's hard, my dear Mrs. Jack, to make a man who doesn't play or sing a note remember that the Moonlight Sonata is not from Gounod's 'Faust,' and that it's bad form to ask Mlle. Vanoni if she admires 'Florodora.'"

My duties as hostess and the pronounced success of the earlier numbers of my program led me presently to forget Tom's existence. He had been cruelly unjust to my guests in asserting that they would prefer ragtime to the classics. The applause that had rewarded the efforts of both Turino and Vanoni had been spontaneous and genuine. Signorina Molatti had created an actual furor with her violin solo, intensified, no doubt, by her marvelous beauty. It was Molatti's success that presently recalled Tom to my reluctant consciousness. As the dark-eyed, fervid young woman responded smilingly to an insistent encore, I caught a glimpse of my unimpressible husband, standing erect at the rear of the crowded music-room and watching the girl's every movement with eyes alight with interest and approval. I had not seen his unresponsive countenance so animated before in years. Mrs. Jack Van Corlear had followed my glance, and a mischievous smile was in her face as she leaned toward me.

"Perhaps Tom is more musical than you imagine, my dear," she whispered, maliciously.

"Do you think it's the violin?" I returned, laughingly, ashamed of the feeling of annoyance that her playful pin-prick had given me.

Jealous of Tom! The idea was too absurd. I had so often wished to

be, but his devotion to me had always been chronic and incurable. "It's really bad form," I had once said to him; "your indifference to other women, Tom, causes comment. Over-emphasis is always vulgar. You underscore our conjugal bliss, my dear boy, in a way that has become a kind of silent reproach to other people. You must really have a mild flirtation now and then, Tom."

It seemed to me that the vivacious Molatti had noted Tom's too apparent enthusiasm, for she smiled and nodded to him as she made ready to coax her Cremona into giving her silent auditors new proof of her most amazing genius. I, a lover of music, had been carried into unknown, blissful realms by the magic of her bow, my whole being throbbing with the joy of strange, weird harmonies that lured my errant soul away from earth, away from my duties as a hostess, my worries as a wife. I came back to my music-room with a thump. Something unusual, out of the common, was taking place, but at first I could not concentrate my faculties in a way to put me in touch with my environment. Presently I realized that Signorina Molatti had left the dais and—could I believe my senses?—that Tom, brazenly, nonchalantly, before the gaze of two hundred wondering eyes, had seated himself at the piano.

"What's the matter with him?" whispered Mrs. Van Corlear to me in an awe-stricken tone.

"Wait," I answered, irrelevantly; "maybe he won't do it."

"Do what?" she returned, almost hysterically.

"I don't know," I gasped; and the thought flashed through my mind that possibly Tom had been drinking.

There lay the hush of expectancy on the astonished throng. Here and there furtive glances were cast at my program cards in search of Tom's name on a little list made up wholly of world-famous artists. But the large majority of my guests knew as well as I that Tom had never touched a piano in his life, that his ignorance of music was as pronounced

as his detestation of it. But he might have been a Paderewski in his total absence of all awkwardness or self-consciousness as he sat motionless at the instrument for a moment, coolly surveying us all, in very truth like a master musician sure of himself and rejoicing in the delight that he was about to vouchsafe to his auditors.

I cannot recall now without a shudder the sensation that cut through my every nerve as Tom raised his large, pudgy hands above the keyboard, his small gray eyes turned toward the ceiling just above my throbbing head. He looked at that instant like the very incarnation of Philistinism poised to hurl down destruction on the centre of all harmonies.

"It's revenge," I groaned, under my breath, and felt Mrs. Jack's cold hand creep into mine.

Down came the paws of Nemesis, and lo, the injustice that I had done to Tom was revealed to me. His touch was masterly. I could not have been more amazed had I seen an elephant threading a needle. The whole episode was strangely blended of the uncanny and the realistic. I found myself noting the angle at which Tom held his chin. He always raised it thus when his man shaved him, his head thrown back and his eyes half-closed.

Then gradually it dawned on me that I was taking keen delight in his rendition of that marvelous ballad in A flat major that Chopin dedicated to Mlle. de Noailles. There is nothing more thoroughly Chopinesque in all the master's works than this perfect exposition of the refined in art. Tom's rendering of the lovely theme in F major, one of the most delicate in the world of music, thrilled me with startled admiration. But a chill came over me. What would he do with the section in C sharp minor, with its inverted dominant pedal in the right hand while the left is carrying on the theme? Without both skill and passion on the part of the performer the interpretation of this passage is certain to be commonplace. But hardly had this doubt assailed me

when I knew that Tom had triumphed over every obstacle of technique and temperament, that he was approaching the harmonic grandeur of the finale with the poise and power of genius in full control of itself and its medium.

I have never fainted. Swooning went out of fashion long before my time, and I am devoted to the modern cult of self-control, but if it hadn't been for Mrs. Jack, who is really fond of me at times, I think that the last bar of Tom's Opus 47 would have seen my finish. The room had begun to whirl in a circle, like a merry-go-round in evening dress, when she steadied me by whispering:

"It's all right, my dear. Tom wins by four lengths, well in hand."

I came to myself in the very centre of a storm of applause. Our guests had forgotten the conventionalities pertaining to a well-ordered musical. The men were on their feet, cheering. The women waved fans and handkerchiefs, and pelted Tom with violets and roses. The poor fellow sat at the piano in a half-dazed condition. A bunch of flowers, deftly thrown, struck him on the forehead, and he put his gifted hand to his brow as if he had just been recalled to consciousness.

"Encore! Encore!" cried our guests. Turino was gesticulating frantically, while Mlle. Vanoni and Signorina Molatti smiled and clapped their hands in exaggerated ecstasy.

I was worried by the expression that had come into Tom's face, and made my way quickly toward the piano.

"Aren't you well, my dear?" I asked, bending toward him, while the uproar behind me decreased a bit.

"What have I been doing, Wini-fred?" he asked, sheepishly, like one who awakens from a dream. "Get one of your damned dagos to sing, will you? I've got to have a drink or die!"

Standing erect abruptly, Tom cast a defiant glance at the chattering throng behind me and hurriedly

made his way through a side door from the music-room. As I turned away from the piano I saw that Signorina Molatti's eyes were fixed on his retreating figure with an expression that my worldly wisdom could not interpret. There was more of wonder than of admiration in her gaze, a gleam of questioning and longing that might, it seemed to me, readily flame into hot anger.

II

REMSEN CONFRONTS A MYSTERY

AFTER saying good-night to the last of my guests, who had expressed regret at the rumor that my husband was seriously indisposed, I hurried to the smoking-room, having learned that Tom had fled thither as a refuge from the curious and the congratulatory. As I came upon him he was alternately puffing a cigar and sipping a brandy and soda. On the instant the conflicting emotions that had beset me during the evening became a wave of anger, sweeping over me with irresistible force.

"Why have you deceived me, Tom Remsen?" I cried, sinking into a chair and resting my aching head against its back, as I scanned his pale, weary countenance attentively. "You have always pretended that you had no knowledge of music. I have heard you say that you couldn't whistle even a bar of 'Yankee Doodle' correctly. What a *poseur* you have been! And to-night, in a vulgar, theatrical way you suddenly exhibit the most astonishing talent. There is not an amateur in the world, Tom, who can interpret Chopin with such sympathy, such perfection of technique, such reserved power as you displayed this evening. You have placed me in a ridiculous position, and I can't conceive of any reasonable motive for your unnatural reticence. Why, Tom—answer me!—why have you concealed from me the fact that you are an accomplished—yes, a brilliant musician?

Think of all the pleasure that we have lost in the last ten years by your deception and falsehoods—for that's what they were, Tom!" My voice broke a little, and I felt the tears creeping toward my eyes. "You have been cruel, Tom! Knowing my passionate love for music, why did you choose to hide a talent that would have drawn us so close together? And your revelation! It was the very refinement of brutality, Tom Remsen, to place me in such an awkward attitude! How could I explain my ignorance of your genius to our friends? They must consider me either a fool or a liar. As for what they think of you, Tom——"

"Stop it, Winifred!" cried my husband, hoarsely, putting up a hand protestingly. "I've had enough. I can't stand anything more to-night. If I tried to tell you the truth you wouldn't believe it, so you'd better leave me. I'll smoke another cigar. I'll never get to sleep again, I fear."

His last words sounded like a groan. My mood was softened by his evident distress.

"Do try to tell me the truth, Tom," I said, gently. "I'll believe what you say. There's a difference between positive and negative lying. I don't think you'd tell me a deliberate falsehood, Tom."

There was something in his appearance at this moment that suggested to me a wounded animal at bay. Presently he lighted a fresh cigar, and gazing at me steadily, said:

"The cold, hard truth is this, Winifred: I never touched the keys of a piano in my life until an hour ago. I remember being drawn irresistibly to the instrument. What happened afterward I don't know. The first thing that I can recall was being hit in the head with some fool woman's bouquet. I remember saying, 'No flowers, please,' in a silly kind of way, but what it all meant I didn't know, and I don't know now. Do you?"

I sat speechless, gazing at Tom in bewilderment. He had never, in the twelve years of our betrothal and

marriage, told me an untruth. I had often caught myself envying women whose husbands spiced the realism of domestic life with a romantic tale now and again. I know a woman who derives great intellectual enjoyment from cross-questioning her lesser half every twenty-four hours in an effort to prove that nature designed her for a clever detective. She would have drooped and died had she married Tom.

As I watched his honest face, pale now and careworn, I realized that I was confronted by two explanations of the present crisis, either one of which was inconceivable. Tom had told me a deliberate lie, or a miracle, to use an unscientific word, had been wrought through forces the existence of which I had always denied.

"No, Tom, I don't know what it means," I answered presently. "How did you happen to choose the Chopin ballad for your *début*?"

I had not intended to hurt the poor fellow's feelings, but the change in his expression from weariness to wonderment filled me with remorse.

"I didn't choose anything," he muttered, reproachfully. "If I made an ass of myself, Winifred, I was not responsible. What the deuce did I do? You haven't told me—and I don't know."

By an effort of will I controlled the nervous chill that was threatening me, and said, quietly:

"Tom, you played Chopin's Ballad No. 3, Opus 47, in a way that would have satisfied Chopin himself. No performer living could have equaled your rendition. It was masterly."

Tom's mouth fell open in amazement. He closed it over a brandy and soda. "I can't believe it," he cried, setting down his glass and gazing at the smoke curling up from his cigar. "Why, Winifred, the thing's absurd. I never heard the—what do you call it?—in my life. And if I'd listened to it every day for a year I couldn't play it. I couldn't even whistle it."

I laughed aloud hysterically. There

was a ludicrous side to the situation, despite its uncanny features.

"What are you laughing at, Winifred?" demanded Tom, angrily. "Is there anything funny about all this? It seems, if I can believe what you say, that I made a kind of pianola of myself without knowing it. Is that a joke? I tell you, Winifred, it's paresis or something worse. Maybe I'll rob a bank next. And when I'm bailed out, I suppose I'll find you in a broad grin."

I was too near the verge of nervous collapse to repress the feeling of unreasonable annoyance that came over me at Tom's words. "I think you're very unjust, Tom," I exclaimed, with great lack of judgment.

"Unjust!" he echoed, petulantly. "Unjust to whom—to what?"

"You're unjust to Chopin," I answered, hotly, realizing that I was talking in a distinctly childish way. "Playing one of his masterpieces is not quite like robbing a bank."

"Why not," he snapped, "if I don't know how to play it? I certainly robbed those fool women of their flowers, didn't I? They pelted me with bouquets as if I was a boy wonder or a long-haired bang-the-keys, and I don't know the soft pedal from the key of E. I wouldn't do Chopin an injustice. He's dead, isn't he? But you mustn't do *me* an injustice, Winifred. I can't stand anything more to-night."

My heart seemed to come into my throat with a sob, and I drew my chair close to Tom's and took his cold hand in mine. "I'm sorry, Tom. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings, but I've been sorely tried, you must admit. I'm not quite myself, I fear."

Tom turned quickly and gazed squarely into my eyes. "Don't you worry, Winifred. You're yourself, all right. But who the dickens am I? If I'm Tom Remsen, I can't play Chopin. And you say I did play Chopin. I don't say I didn't. But how did I do it? Tom Remsen couldn't do it. Look at my hands, Winifred. Could my fingers knock

a pianissimo out of a minor chord?—if that's what that fellow Chopin does. I tell you it's queer, and I don't like it."

A well-defined shudder shook Tom's heavy frame, and his hand, as it rested in mine, trembled perceptibly. His voice had sunk to a whisper as he asked: "Do you think it possible that I was hypnotized, Winifred? I never took any stock in hypnotism, but there may be something in it. That Signor Turino has got a queer eye."

"I'm sure I don't know what to think, Tom," I admitted, reluctantly. By abandoning the theory that Tom had deceived me for a dozen years I was plunged into a tempestuous sea of mystery and conjecture. "But come, my dear boy, you are fagged out. We'll talk it over in the morning. Perhaps our minds will be clearer after a few hours' sleep."

"I couldn't sleep now," he returned, nervously, glancing at his watch. "Don't go yet, Winifred. It's only two o'clock."

We sat silent for a time, hand clasped in hand, like a youth and maiden awed by a sudden realization of the marvelous mysteries of existence.

Presently Tom spoke again, and I felt that it was a lawyer, in full control of his nerves, who questioned me. "Did I look—ah—dazed—or queer—when I went to the piano, my dear?"

"No, Tom," I answered, after a pause. "You—you—now, don't think me flippant—you looked just as you do when you're being shaved."

"Before all those people!" he gasped. "What *do* you mean, Winifred?"

"Your chin was up in the air, Tom, and your head was thrown back."

"But you didn't see any lather?" he asked, foolishly.

"Don't be silly, Tom," I cried, petulantly. But I had done him another injustice; he had not intended to be jocose.

"And then what did I do?" he asked, eagerly.

"And then you played that ballad

with the inspiration of genius and the technique of a master."

"It stumps me!" he muttered. "Winifred, is there anything about this fellow Chopin in the library? Any books about him?"

"Yes, Tom, several; but you'd better not look at them to-night—if at all. Perhaps to-morrow you won't care to."

Tom's heavy features assumed their most stubborn aspect. He stood erect, still holding my hand, and I was forced to rise.

"Come with me, Winifred. I'm going to solve this mystery before I sleep, even if it takes two days. Come!"

Without further protest I accompanied Tom to the library.

III

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

It was a real relief to get into the library. Tom felt it, and his face soon resumed its normal expression. The heavy shadows beneath his eyes remained, but there had come a flush into his cheeks, and he carried himself with the air of a man who has a purpose in life and is in a fair way to accomplish it. I remember that the idea came into my mind that Tom had assumed the attitude of a lawyer who has been retained by the prosecution and has but little time in which to prepare his case. I had grown tactless, I fear, in my change of mood, for I was indiscreet enough to say, as Tom seated himself beside the library table, leaving it to me to find the books that he wished to consult: "In the case of Winifred Remsen and others, against the late Frederic François Chopin, charged with house-breaking and breach of the peace."

Tom turned instantly and a gleam of anger flashed in his eyes as they met mine. "If you cannot treat this matter with the seriousness that I think it deserves, Winifred, you would do well to retire. It's no joke. When I make a donkey of myself be-

fore a lot of perfectly respectable people, I consider it a matter of some importance. You don't seem to grasp the full horror of it all. I suppose that I'm liable to have another attack at any time. In fact, it may become chronic. I have of late come across very curious psychical phenomena in a professional way, Winifred, and I insist on taking every precaution before you are forced to place me in the hands of the alienists."

"Tom!" I cried, in horror and remorse. "You mustn't talk like that. There's nothing the matter with your mind. I'll admit that I can't explain what happened to-night, but I'm sure that it was not caused by any mental trouble on your part. There is doubtless some very simple and commonplace explanation of your—your——"

"Call it seizure," suggested Tom, curtly. "What do you find there?"

I carried a little armful of books to the table and placed them within Tom's reach.

"Here's a 'Life of Chopin,' by Niecks," I said. "'Frederic Chopin,' by Franz Liszt. Here's Joseph Bennett and Karasowski and the 'Histoire de ma Vie,' by George Sand. And here are Willeby and Mme. Audley. And I think I have——"

"That'll do for to-night," remarked Tom, seizing the volume nearest to his hand. "What kind of a chap was this Chopin, anyway?"

"He was simply fascinating," I remarked, indiscreetly.

"H'm!" growled Tom, angrily. "Not very respectable, I suppose you mean. George Sand! She was a woman, wasn't she? How did she happen to write his life? What did she know about him?"

I have called Tom a Philistine. Perhaps that was too harsh a term to use, but I'm sure there is a good deal of the Puritan about him.

"She used to see a good deal of him," I answered, rather lamely. "They were great chums for a while."

"H'm," growled Tom, throwing aside George Sand's work and opening another. Presently he began

to read biographical scraps aloud, for all the world like an angry police official drawing up a sweeping indictment against a man of genius.

"The little Frederic duly received the name of Frederic François, after the son of Count Skarbek, who stood as his godfather," began Tom. "We are told that he very soon showed a great susceptibility to musical sounds, although hardly in the direction which we should have expected, for he howled lustily whenever he heard them."

Tom looked up from the printed page, and our eyes met.

"That's a curious coincidence, Winifred," he remarked, musingly. "It's a family tradition that I used to yell like a young Indian whenever they tried to sing to me in my babyhood. A rattle-box would quiet me, but the sweetest lullaby always made me howl. But I must get on. Chopin began well, didn't he?"

There was silence for a time as Tom feverishly scanned the pages of his book.

"The dickens! Listen to this!" he exclaimed presently. "'During his ninth year he was invited to assist at a concert for the benefit of the poor. He played a pianoforte concerto, the composition of Adalbert Gyrowetz, a famous composer of the time.'"

Tom placed the book on the table and held the pages open with his hand as he glanced at me over his shoulder. "If he played that kind of thing at nine years of age, Winifred, there was something uncanny about it. It was just as unnatural as what happened to me to-night. I'm beginning to formulate a theory about this kind of thing, my dear." Tom placed the open book face downward and turned squarely toward me. "Music, you see, may be, like electricity, imprisoned, as it were, in a universe of both conductors and non-conductors. It may be that a temperament, like mine for instance, that is permanently a non-conductor might, under given conditions, become temporarily a conductor.

Chopin played like a master at nine years of age. He had become a conductor, and remained so permanently. When he howled at music as a baby he was still a non-conductor—just as I had been up to to-night—or rather last night. Possibly the conditions that made me a kind of spasmodic music-box, with the Chopin peg pulled out, may never occur again. What do you think, Winifred? Doesn't all that sound reasonable?"

Before I could formulate a sensible answer to a not very sensible proposition Tom had resumed the perusal of his book. He appeared to me like a man fascinated against his will by a line of investigation that he had begun as a disagreeable duty. But I was glad to see that he had regained full control of himself and that his countenance no longer displayed traces of intense mental disquietude.

"He was a pretty lively boy," remarked Tom, a few moments later. "Listen, Winifred! 'At school Fred-eric was a prime favorite, and was always in the midst of any fun or mischief that was going on. His talent for mimicry was always extraordinary, and has been commented on not only by George Sand and Liszt but by Balzac.'"

Tom gazed at me musingly. "Do you consider that significant, my dear?" he asked, with a seriousness that struck me as both ludicrous and pathetic. I was getting worried by Tom's persistence in this futile line of endeavor.

"It's nearly three o'clock, Tom Remsen," I cried, standing erect. "Come up-stairs at once. It won't be fair to your clients for you to get to your office fagged out for lack of sleep."

"Sit down, Winifred," he said, peremptorily. "It's little use I'll be to my clients until I find out what happened to me in the music-room. Suppose that I should have an attack of—what shall I call it?—Chopinitis—in the court-room? Suppose I should suddenly begin to sing—or perhaps whistle a—what'd-you-call-'em?—pianoforte concerto?

—what would the judge say? I'd be disbarred, Winifred, for indecent exposure of musical genius. No; I'm going to find out more about this strange affair—here and now."

I was forced to reseat myself, protesting silently against Tom's absurd stubbornness. I endeavored in vain to shake off a feeling of uneasiness that was creeping over me, a sensation that was closely akin to fear of the phlegmatic man who sat before me motionless and calm, pursuing a course of study that had been inspired by a most untenable supposition. What had Chopin to do with the matter? What difference could it make to Tom whether the latter had been one kind of man or another? It was ridiculous to assert that in Chopin's personality might be found an explanation of the curious incident that had made my musical so memorable. My prejudice against Spiritualists, Christian Scientists, Theosophists and other eccentrics had been, I had believed, shared by my husband. But there he sat at three o'clock in the morning trying to find among the biographical data before him some explanation of his recent "seizure," that must, of necessity, lean toward the occult. That a well-balanced, rather materialistic lawyer, whose mental methods were habitually logical, should suddenly begin to dabble in psychical mysteries in this way frightened me the more the longer I weighed Tom's words and actions in all their bearings. Nevertheless, I was forced to admit to myself that he had never looked saner in his life than he did at that moment, as he turned from his book again and gazed straight into my tired eyes.

"He was a very flirtatious chap, Winifred, and very fickle. Listen to this: 'Although of a peculiarly impressionable and susceptible disposition, and, as a not unnatural consequence, more or less fickle where women were concerned, Chopin's love affairs did, on more than one occasion, assume a serious aspect. He had conceived a fancy for the granddaughter of a celebrated master, and

although contemplating matrimony with her, he had at the same time in his mind's eye another lady resident in Poland, his loyalty being engaged nowhere and his fickle heart concentrated on no one passion. One day, when visiting the former young lady in company with a musician who was at the time better known in Paris than he himself, she unconsciously offered a chair to his companion first. So piqued was he at what he considered a slight that he not only never called on her again, but dismissed her entirely from his thoughts.' Do you begin to see, Winifred, what a queer fellow he was? Really, I'm inclined to think——"

I was standing erect, gazing at him angrily.

"If you are joking, Tom," I exclaimed, having lost all patience, "I think you are displaying most wretched taste. If you are really in earnest I am very sorry for you. I'm going to bed. I hope I'll find you fully recovered at breakfast."

He did not seem to be at all impressed by my exhibition of temper.

"Wait just a moment, Winifred," he suggested, his eyes fixed on his book. "Here it is about George Sand—their first meeting, you know. Wait! I'll read it to you."

"I shall not wait, Tom Remsen," I cried. "Chopin's love affairs are nothing to me—and they should be nothing to you. Good-night. This is my last word. Good-night."

As I reached the door I glanced over my shoulder. Tom seemed to have forgotten my existence. He had plunged again into the dust-heap of an old scandal that seemed to fascinate him—Tom Remsen, who had hitherto always deprecated and avoided that kind of research.

IV

SIGNORINA MOLATTI

Two days went by, and while I still pondered the great mystery and kept a close watch on Tom, I had be-

gun to hope that the exactions of his profession had led him to abandon his effort to explain what he had called his "seizure." He had been busy of late with the technicalities involved in the formation of a new trust, and his mind seemed to be wholly engrossed by this gigantic task. By tacit consent we had both avoided all reference to my recent musical and its weird and inexplicable outcome. At times I was almost inclined to believe that Tom had forgotten Chopin and all his works.

As for myself, I could not recover a normal state of mind. For the first time in my life I felt an admiration for the very characteristics of my husband's make-up that hitherto had annoyed and wearied me. His ability to rebound at once from the shock that he had sustained filled me with both envy and amazement. I had begun to realize that the mental poise of an unimpressible, unimaginative man is a very desirable and praiseworthy possession.

I regretted at times that I could not throw myself into some despotic occupation that should demand all my physical and mental energies. As yet I had not found the courage to face the world and its questionings. For two days I had denied myself to even my most intimate friends, not excepting Mrs. Jack Van Corlear, who had hurried to me on the day succeeding my musical. I knew that my callers were actuated by a not unnatural curiosity, and I lacked the nervous energy to face people who would politely claim the right to know why Tom had always concealed his genius as a pianist. I think I fully understand the set in which I move. We dearly love a new sensation. Without leaving my house or receiving a single visitor, I could readily grasp the fact that the leading topic of conversation in society at the moment revolved round Tom Remsen as a masterly interpreter of Chopin.

Chopin! I had begun to hate the name. But I had not been able to resist the temptation to spend many

hours in the library poring over the books that dealt, directly or indirectly, with his personality and achievements. The temporary enthusiasm that Tom had displayed for research into the life of Frederic Chopin bade fair to become a permanent passion in my case. I devoted whole afternoons to playing, in my amateurish way, his waltzes, mazurkas, nocturnes and ballads. One of the latter, his Opus 47, I had not the audacity to attempt. Somehow Tom's recent rendition of the piece seemed to stand as a barrier that it would be sacrilege for me to cross. Nevertheless, I longed to hear the ballad again, and was almost tempted to ask Tom to play it to me alone. That he was wholly incapable of repeating his recent performance my mind refused to believe. I had returned, almost unconsciously, to my first conviction, that my husband had wilfully deceived me for years regarding his musical ability.

I sat poring over an English criticism of Chopin's posthumous works late one afternoon when a card was brought to me in the library that tempted me to come out of my self-imposed retreat. It bore the name:

SIGNORINA MOLATTI.

In the half-light of the drawing-room the girl looked handsomer than in the glare of evening lamps. Her dark, oriental beauty was at its best in the subdued glow of early twilight. She was dressed in a rich but quiet Parisian costume, and I felt that her attractiveness increased the further she was removed from Signor Turino, Mlle. Vanoni and the other noted artists with whom she associated. Nevertheless, I realized that my manner was cold and unsympathetic as we seated ourselves and I awaited her pleasure. Having had business dealings with the signorina I was not willing to admit that she could assume the right to call on me as a social equal.

But patrician blood must have flowed in Molatti's veins, for she sat there silent and calm, and my skir-

mish line was driven back. I spoke first. The self-confidence in the girl's smile hurt me.

"It is a pleasure, signorina, to have an opportunity I had not hoped for, to thank you again for the great pleasure you afforded my guests the night before last."

"But it is me, signora, who is in the debt of you," said Molatti, in her soft, musical, broken English. "I hava coma to you to thanka you and to ask a leetle favor. Signor Remsen! oh, eet was so wonderful—so vera wonderful! I hava waited all my leetle life for eet."

I stared at the girl in astonishment. Her enthusiasm, her gestures, the brilliant glow in her dark eyes offended me. And "eet!" What was "eet," for which she had waited all her life?

"Yes?" I remarked, interrogatively. Her fervor was not cooled by the iced water of my question-mark.

"Leesten to me, signora. I hava worshed Chopin since I was a leetle girl. I hava heard alla the great interpretaires of the *maestro*. But I hava nevaire heard Chopin. In my dreams—*si*, signora, but nevaire in my hours that are awake. But I cama here! Signor Remsen—he playa Chopin! Eet was no dream. Eet was the soul of the *maestro* speaking to the soul of me. Eet was wonderful—so vera wonderful!"

Conflicting emotions warred within me. I hardly dared speak lest I should either laugh or cry hysterically. With lips compressed I sat motionless, staring at the girl, into whose eloquent eyes there had come a pleading look that suggested tears.

"Signor Remsen," she murmured, presently, like a devotee who breathes the name of an idol—"do you thinka, signora, that he would let me hear him play again? Peety me, signora! I cannot sleep. I cannot eat. I crave only the music of the *maestro*—music that I hava heard only once in my leetle life. Signor Remsen! Eef he would per-

meet me—justa once—to accompany him on my leetle violin—oh, signora, I coulda then die happy. I should hava leevied just a leetle while, and then I would not care. But now, I am so unhappy—so vera miserable!”

I was too nervous to stand this kind of thing any longer. I rose, and Molatti faced me, erect at once.

“You pay my husband’s talent a great compliment, signorina,” I said, coldly; “but I cannot take it on myself to answer you in his name. However, I shall present your request to him and let you know at once what he says.” A diabolical impulse came over me, and I added: “Of course, Mr. Remsen would not wish you to starve, signorina, nor to die a horrible death from insomnia.”

The girl spiked my guns—if that be the right expression—by a merry, musical laugh.

“You are so vera kind!” she cried. “I kissa your lovely hand.”

Before I could prevent it she had touched my outstretched hand with her red, smiling lips; then she took her departure. I returned to the library in a condition that verged dangerously on complete nervous collapse.

At dinner that evening Tom was unwontedly silent. As I glanced at him over my soup there was something in his face that suggested thoughts not connected with the Pepper and Salt Trust. I was soon to become accustomed to this expression and to identify it in my mind as “Chopinesque.”

“Aren’t you feeling well to-night, Tom?” I ventured presently, noting that he was drinking more wine than usual.

“A bit tired, Winifred,” he answered, absently. Then his eyes met mine, and I saw that he was worried. I had planned to fulfil conscientiously my promise to Signorina Molatti, but the time seemed inopportune. I was glad, presently, that I had refrained from mentioning my caller and her mission. As we were sipping our

coffee Tom tossed an envelope across the table to me.

I opened it with a chill misgiving. It ran as follows:

MR. THOMAS REMSEN.

DEAR SIR: As it has come to the knowledge of the Executive Committee of the Chopin Society of New York that your rendition of the works of our master is unexcelled by any living performer, we humbly beg of you to accept the hospitality of our association at an early date, to be chosen by you. Our members and their guests would consider it the highest of privileges could they be permitted to hear you play such selections from Chopin as you might wish to perform. Thanking you in advance for the great joy that you will vouchsafe to us by accepting this invitation, we remain, etc.

There lay a wan smile on Tom’s face as he met my gaze. “Kind, aren’t they?” he muttered. “What the deuce’ll I write to ’em, Winifred?”

“You can’t accept, of course,” I said, confidently. Then I hesitated, surprised at the queer gleam in Tom’s eyes. “Can you?” I added, weakly.

“I can, I suppose,” he remarked, with an effort at playfulness. “There’s no law against it.”

His answer struck me as strangely unlike him. If he had cried, “The Chopin Society be damned!” I should have felt more at ease, less oppressed by a sensation of nameless dread. There was something distinctly uncanny in Tom’s manner.

“It would be a good joke on ’em, wouldn’t it, if I *should* accept their bid?” he remarked as he lighted his cigar. “Confound their impudence! That’s what they deserve.”

“But—but—Tom, would you try to—to play?” I gasped, in dismay.

Tom laughed in a way that shocked my overwrought nerves. It was a shrill, unnatural note of merriment, that struck me as diabolical. “Play?” he repeated, sardonically. “Why not? Do you imagine, madam, that the marvelous genius of Thomas Remsen, interpreter of Frederic François Chopin, is to be confined

strictly to your musicals? That would be a gross injustice to the music-loving world, would it not? But come into the library with me, Winifred. I must resume my studies as a student of 'the master.'"

I followed Tom mechanically, fascinated by his gruesome mood. For the life of me I couldn't tell whether he was joking or in earnest, whether it was his mind or mine that had lost its poise.

V

A POLISH FANTASIA

I MADE a clean breast of the whole matter to Mrs. Jack Van Corlear the next morning. I had sent for her early in the day, saying that I was in trouble and needed advice, and she came to me at once. It was a great relief to me just to look into her eyes and hold her hand.

"It's about Tom!" she remarked, sagely. "Has he done it again?"

Her question made me realize fully the awkwardness of my position. Close as our friendship had been, I had never gossiped about Tom to Mrs. Jack. If there is anything more vulgar than what Tom had once called "extra-marital confidences between women," I don't know what it is. But I was forced to talk about my husband's increasing eccentricity to somebody, or endanger my own mental health. I knew that I should derive temporary nervous restoration from a heart-to-heart confab with a woman who has the reputation of being "a mighty good fellow." I have heard people complain that Mrs. Jack was "too horsey" for their taste. But if you are seeking a friend who shall possess courage, reticence and common sense, pick out a woman that rides. A fondness for horses seems to enlarge a woman's sympathies, while at the same time it increases her discretion.

"He has not actually done it again, my dear," I answered; "but he threatens to. He informed me at breakfast this morning that he in-

tended to accept the invitation of the Chopin Society. Furthermore, he said he was going to send the society a cheque for their Chopin Monument Fund."

"Tom's a thoroughbred, isn't he?" exclaimed Mrs. Jack, with what struck me as ill-timed enthusiasm. "But tell me more about Signorina Molatti. Did you keep your promise to her?"

"Yes; I told him this morning about her call. Do you know, he seemed to be actually pleased. It wasn't like Tom at all. Young women always bore him. And he has a special abhorrence for people connected in any way with the stage."

"Now, Winifred, tell me honestly: Has Tom never played a note in all the twelve years that you have known him?"

"Never! never! never!" I cried, hotly. It was so hard to make even Mrs. Jack, who fully understands me, get at my point of view.

"And he wins a big handicap the first time he starts," mused my confidante. "It's miraculous! Is there a strain of music in his blood, my dear? Any of the Remsens gifted that way?"

"Not that I ever heard of," I answered, rather petulantly. Mrs. Jack's surmises seemed to be as unsatisfactory as my own solitary musings.

"Is he going to play for Molatti?" she asked, presently.

The blood rushed to my cheeks as I realized that this was the keynote to the whole conversation. "He says he is," I confessed, reluctantly. "You may not believe it, but he actually joked about it; said that it would be cruel on his part to withhold from 'a worthy young woman'—what an expression!—a pleasure that might restore her appetite and sleep."

Mrs. Jack laughed aloud, despite the frown on my brow. "Give him the bit, my dear," she advised, playfully. "You aren't afraid of a little black filly over a distance, are you? But tell me, what does Tom

say about it all? You tell me that he speaks of his recent rendition of the Chopin ballad as 'a seizure.'"

"For nearly two days, my dear, I fondly imagined he had forgotten all about it. He didn't speak of it. But last night he went into the library and recommenced his researches into the life of Chopin. I couldn't help laughing at some of the comments he made, but he was in dead earnest all the time. I am forced to believe Tom really thinks he is—it seems so absurd when one puts it into words—thinks he is haunted by Chopin's spirit, or something of that kind."

Mrs. Jack's mood changed and the merriment in her face disappeared. "Do you know," she remarked, thoughtfully, "I am sometimes inclined to think we are awfully ignorant about some things. I have heard of so many queer occurrences of an uncanny nature lately—and among the very nicest kind of people, too. And it used to be really good form to have a family ghost, you know. Perhaps it's coming in again. Old fashions have a way of cropping up again, haven't they?"

I could not refrain from smiling at Mrs. Jack's peculiar attitude toward psychical mysteries. However, I refused to be led into generalities. "But just look at the ludicrousness of the idea," I began. "Admitting, my dear, that Chopin's soul has grown uneasy and desires a temporary reincarnation, would he be likely to select Tom as a—what shall I call it?—medium? Wouldn't he be more inclined to haunt a man who was naturally musical, or at least loved music? But you know, Mrs. Jack, what Tom is. He hasn't the slightest liking for music of any kind. Unless he has been a great actor for many years, never for an instant forgetting his rôle, I'm sure of this."

"What can we know about the methods or longings of a disembodied spirit?" argued my confidante, logically enough. "Perhaps Chopin was backing a long shot, just for the excitement of the thing."

I glanced at Mrs. Jack half-angrily. I thought for a moment that she was inclined to poke fun at me. But her face was as serious as mine, and I repented quickly of my unjust suspicion.

And thus we talked in a circle for an hour or more. Mrs. Jack lunched with me, and finally persuaded me to spend the afternoon with her, driving along the river side. As we drew up in front of the house about five o'clock, I turned to her with gratitude in my heart and eyes and voice.

"Thank you so much, my dear," I said, gratefully. "I'll come to you in the morning if there are any new developments in the case." I had turned away when Mrs. Jack called me back.

"It's a problem that you and I can't solve, little woman," she said, affectionately. "If he has another attack, or any new symptoms develop, what would you think of consulting a specialist? I'd go with you, of course. We needn't give our names, you know."

"A specialist—in what?" I asked, trying to repress a feeling of annoyance that I must conceal from a friend who had been all kindness to me at a crisis.

"Think it over," returned Mrs. Jack, vaguely. "I'm sure I don't know who is an authority on—what did Tom call it?—Chopinitis. But come to me in the morning, anyway; I may have something really practical to suggest. And don't touch him with the whip! Tom's a thoroughbred, you know, my dear. Good-bye!"

As I entered the hall, depressed by a quick reaction from my recent cheerfulness, I was roused from my self-absorption by a revelation that drove the blood to my head and made me dizzy for a moment. From the music-room, always unoccupied at this hour of the day, came the weird, searching harmonies of a Polish fantasia arranged for the piano and violin. The effect was marvelous. Softened by distance, the perfect accord of the two instruments bore tes-

timony to the complete sympathy that existed between the pianist and the wielder of the bow. There was something in this half-barbaric music that set my veins on fire. Hardly knowing what I did and with no thought of what I intended to do, I crossed the drawing-room quickly and noiselessly, and stood motionless at the entrance to the music-room.

I remember now that I felt no sensation of astonishment at what I saw. It seemed to me that the picture before my eyes was just what I had come from a remote distance to gaze upon.

Tom was seated at the piano, his back toward me. Beside him stood Signorina Molatti, her Cremona resting against her shoulder. They had not heard my footsteps, and I realized that if I had yelled like a wild Indian they would not have come to earth. They played like creatures in a trance, and I felt the strange, seductive hypnotism of the mad, sweet, feverish music that they made, as I stood there voiceless, motionless, helpless, hopeless. Vainly I appealed to my pride. Vainly I strove to act as one worthy of the name of mondaine. The shock had been too sudden, too severe, and I could not trust myself.

As silently as I had come, I crept away. Recrossing the drawing-room, I encountered the butler in the hall. My face flushed with shame as I said to him:

"If Mr. Remsen asks for me, James, say that I have not returned."

Then I stumbled up-stairs to my rooms, dismissed my maid curtly, and gave way like a foolish girl to foolish tears.

VI

CONSULTING A SPECIALIST

"BUT, madam, the symptoms, in so far as I can gather them, are insufficient for an accurate diagnosis. You have stated the case clearly and in minute detail, but my experience in the new school of medicine—if such

it can be called—convinces me that you have inadvertently omitted some significant factor in the premises, without which I can vouchsafe to you nothing more valuable than sweeping generalities. In other words, you have given me an opportunity to lay before you a theory, but no chance to suggest to you a practical line of action."

I looked helplessly at Mrs. Van Corlear and saw that she was scanning Dr. Emerson Woodruff's strong, thoughtful face attentively. Presently she glanced at me, as if asking my permission to speak, and I nodded to her in acquiescence.

"We have told you, doctor," began Mrs. Jack, "that this—ah—friend of ours plays nothing but Chopin. That's important, of course?"

"Exceedingly," remarked Dr. Woodruff, impressively, his hands folded across his chest and his head bent forward. Even at that critical moment I found myself wondering if all practitioners of the anti-materialistic school were large, dignified, magnetic men, with majestic brows and bright, searching eyes.

"But he's not always a soloist," went on Mrs. Jack, in a low but vibrant tone; "he has shown an inclination of late to travel in double harness—piano and violin, you know."

An enigmatical smile came into Dr. Woodruff's face for an instant. The man's intuition was so quick and keen that I had begun to fear I should find it difficult to maintain my incognito.

"You say," he asked, presently, turning toward me, "that his general health remains good? He has no tendency toward melancholia; doesn't grow flighty at times in his talk?"

"I have never seen him look so well as he does at present," I answered, wearily. I had come to Dr. Woodruff against my will, succumbing weakly to Mrs. Jack's insistence. And now the whole affair appeared ridiculous and the doctor's questions irrelevant and fu-

tile. My interest in the séance—if that is the word for it—was reawakened, however, by the physician's next question.

"Who plays the violin for him?" he asked, curtly.

Mrs. Jack answered him at once. "Signorina Molatti. You know her by reputation?"

"Yes," he answered; "I have heard her play. She has a touch of genius. They must make great music together—Molatti and your friend."

A lump came into my throat and I clutched the arms of my chair awkwardly. That Dr. Woodruff had noticed my emotion I felt sure.

"Well, what is your explanation of all this, doctor?" I asked, impatiently. I was thoroughly out of harmony with myself, Mrs. Jack and the physician, and my pride revolted at the false position in which I had been placed. A skeptic who goes to a clergyman for guidance sacrifices both his logic and his dignity. Here I sat in Dr. Emerson Woodruff's office, under an assumed name, telling a stranger weird tales about a supposititious acquaintance who was in reality my own husband. Had I not been unfair to Tom, Dr. Woodruff and myself? Surely the road to truth is not through a zigzag lane of lies!

"My dear madam," began the doctor, in his most pompous manner, "the case as you have stated it is unique in the annals of what I take the liberty to call the new science—new, that is, to the Western world. To the brooding East, the introspective, sapient, miracle-working Orient, there would be nothing strange or inexplicable in what your—er—friend calls his 'seizure.' I have seen in India phenomena that, should I describe them to you, would wholly destroy what little confidence you have in my veracity and common sense. May I ask why you have come to me, madam? You have no faith in the school to which I am devoted."

His voice had grown suddenly

stern, and I avoided his gaze in confusion. The ease with which he had read my thoughts offended and frightened me.

"It's my fault, Dr. Woodruff," cried Mrs. Jack, loyally; "I persuaded her to come. I have been over the jumps before, and I rather like the course. But it's pretty stiff going at first, you must acknowledge."

To my surprise, Dr. Woodruff laughed aloud. His merriment restored my equilibrium, and I hastened to explain.

"Won't you believe me, doctor, when I say that I have not come to you in an antagonistic mood? I am intensely interested in the problem we have laid before you—and I feel sure you can help us to read the riddle. We have a friend who has no music in his soul. Suddenly he begins to play Chopin like a master. Then he develops a fondness for duets. We fear the future. Presently he will begin to neglect his business and his—and—"

"And his wife," added the doctor, glancing at me, quizzically. Then he turned sharply toward Mrs. Jack. "Is this man fond of horses? Does he ride?"

"Before he became so completely absorbed in his profession he was a marvel over timber," she answered, with enthusiasm. "I remember—" she began, reminiscently.

"Never mind ancient history," I cried, rather rudely. "I really can't see, Dr. Woodruff, what his cross-country skill has to do with his Chopin seizure."

"As I understand it, madam," explained the physician, evidently hurt by my petulance, "as I understand it, you are desirous of turning your—ah—friend's mind from music. You tell me that his professional duties have had no effect in this connection. To use an expression that is not often employed by psychologists, a counter-irritant is what I had in mind. It is not strictly scientific to prescribe a remedy before the diagnosis is completed, but, as I

gather from your words, you are anxious to attempt something in the nature of a cure at once."

I am sure there flashed a gleam of suspicion, not unmingled with contempt, from my eyes as I scanned the doctor's face. Surely it was absurd to suppose that if Tom was really the victim of some supernatural manifestation he could be restored to a normal condition by a resumption of his equestrian enthusiasms. Furthermore, what was I to gain by the line of treatment that this psychological *poseur* seemed to have in mind? Was it not just as well for my peace of mind to have Tom playing duets with Signorina Molatti as chasing an anise-seed bag across fields and ditches in company with Mrs. Jack Van Corlear or some other horsey woman?

"Do you think he has been hypnotized by Signorina Molatti?" I asked, bluntly, anxious to pin the physician down to some explanation of Tom's eccentricities that should not offend against probability.

"Admitting the possibility of hypnotism in this instance," answered Dr. Woodruff, gravely, "it would seem to be much more likely that your friend had hypnotized Signorina Molatti. Do you not agree with me?"

Taking all the circumstances into consideration, I was forced to admit to myself that his argument was sound. But I could not imagine Tom in the rôle of a Svengali. Whichever way I turned I was at the horn of a dilemma.

"The fact is, madam," began Dr. Woodruff, very seriously, "the fact is that your reticence has placed me in a somewhat awkward position. While you have apparently made a clean breast of the whole affair, there are several gaps in your story that I must fill up before I can be of any great service to you. There are various explanations of your friend's remarkable outbreak that naturally suggest themselves. Most people would assert at once that he had deliberately concealed his musical ability for years, planning to make a sensational *début* when occasion served. You

have rejected this explanation as inconsistent with your knowledge of the man's character. I accept your view of the matter, and lay aside as untenable the seemingly most reasonable solution of the problem. Practically but two lines of conjecture remain open to us. Your friend may have been hypnotized, may have become the plaything of a harmless medium who possesses a sense of humor and enjoys a practical joke. But, I must admit, this explanation appears far-fetched and involves several very improbable hypotheses."

The doctor paused for a time and eyed us musingly. I felt better disposed toward him than heretofore, recognizing the fact that I had been listening to the words of a well-balanced, logical man who might tread lofty heights, but who always stepped with care. If Dr. Emerson Woodruff was a mystic and a dreamer, there was nothing in his outward seeming or his mental methods to indicate it.

"How many hurdles on the other track?" asked Mrs. Jack, abruptly.

"Pardon me," said the physician, gently; "I didn't catch your meaning."

"There were two lines of conjecture open to us," explained Mrs. Jack, "after we had agreed that—what shall I call him?—the man with Chopinitis is not a liar. You don't accept the hypnotic theory, Dr. Woodruff. What's the other?"

"Would you be shocked," asked the psychologist, suavely, "if I should suggest that your friend may be possibly under the direct influence of the spirit of the late Frederic François Chopin?"

"That's what Tom thinks!" I cried, excitedly, and then bit my tongue regretfully. Dr. Woodruff's penetrating eyes were fixed on me.

"I said that there were gaps in your narrative," he remarked, reproachfully. "Your friend—I take it that his name is Tom—believes, then, that he is under the control of Chopin?"

"I think he does," I answered, not very graciously; "he has spent much

time of late reading the details of Chopin's life."

"H'm!" exclaimed the doctor, like one who comes gladly on a new symptom in a puzzling case; "would it not be possible, madam, for me to see this man, unobserved myself? If I could hear him play it would be throwing a flood of light on the case. As it is, I am groping in the dark."

"And—and—in case, sir, that your worst fears are realized," I faltered, "can you do anything for him? Can he be cured?"

"You see, doctor, she didn't marry Chopin. Naturally——"

The look that I gave Mrs. Jack quieted her restless tongue. But the fat was in the fire.

"Yes, the murder's out, Dr. Woodruff," I confessed, wearily. "We've been talking about my husband. We were very happy together before his seizure. And—and—now——"

"And now his wife isn't one, two, three," cried Mrs. Jack, excitedly; "and it's a burning shame. Can you do something for him, doctor? Surely you don't think it's chronic, do you?"

The suspicion of a smile crossed the physician's face, and I felt the blood come into my cheeks. I had no intention of laying my marital misery before the keen eyes of this strangely powerful man, but somehow I felt a sense of relief now that he had come into possession of all the facts.

"If you think it advisable, doctor, for you to hear my husband play," I said, presently, "I'm sure it can be arranged. He has agreed to give a recital at the rooms of the Chopin Society to-morrow evening. He has asked us to go with him. Could you not obtain a card? He would not know, of course, why you were there."

"I have many friends among the Chopin idolaters; it is easily arranged," remarked Dr. Woodruff, as he rose and ushered us toward the exit from his inner office. "Meanwhile, madam, I shall make a close study of the case from the data al-

ready at hand. I am very grateful to you for coming to me, and I think I can safely promise to be of service to you. *Au revoir*. To-morrow evening at eight."

As we seated ourselves in the carriage I turned angrily to Mrs. Jack. "Why did you betray me?" I cried. "It was cruel, cruel!"

Mrs. Jack smiled affectionately and seized my hand. "Don't be annoyed at me, my dear. I was merely doing justice to Dr. Woodruff. It's absurd to try to put a thoroughbred over the water jump with blinders. It's unfair to the horse, to say the least."

VII

A PRELIMINARY CANTER

"Do you really intend to go, Tom? But suppose, dear, you don't feel like playing; what will happen then? Do be sensible, old fellow, and stay home with me. You always shunned notoriety—and now you go in search of it. What is the matter with you, Tom? You haven't been at all frank with me since—since——"

"Since when, my dear?" asked my husband, smiling at me kindly over his *demi-tasse*.

"Since you played that duet with Signorina Molatti in the music-room," I answered, ashamed of the feeling of jealousy that I had nourished for several days. As I gazed at Tom's honest face the absurdity of the accusation that I had brought against him in this indirect way forced itself upon me. My husband at that moment struck me as the least flirtatious-looking man I had ever seen. But facts are stubborn things. I had good reason to believe that Tom had accompanied a famous violiniste, not only in our music-room but in the signorina's own drawing-room. It is astonishing how quickly a suspicious wife develops into a female Sherlock Holmes!

"I plead guilty to the indictment," said Tom presently, lighting a cigar.

"Suppose we go into the library, Winifred. We can have a quiet half-hour at least before we start."

I derived both pleasure and pain from this suggestion. It was satisfactory to find Tom more inclined to be companionable than he had been for nearly a week. On the other hand, I was disappointed at discovering that his determination to attend the meeting of the Chopin Society remained unshaken. That any further protest from me would be futile I fully realized, and it was with a feeling of apprehension and disquietude that I seated myself in the library and watched Tom as he dreamily blew smoke into the air, seemingly forgetful of my presence. After a time he began to speak, more like a poet soliloquizing than an unimaginative lawyer addressing his wife.

"It was a strangely vivid vision. I have had dreams that were like reality, but none that approached this one in intensity. I passed first through a doorway that led into old, picturesque, crumbling cloisters, forming a quadrangle. Stretching away from these cloisters ran long corridors with vaulted roofs. Down one of the corridors I hurried toward a light that seemed to come through a rose window, intensifying the grim darkness surrounding me. It was bitterly cold; the chill of death seemed to clutch at my heart. And always I heard the sound of mournful voices through the resounding galleries."

"Tom!" I cried, shocked by the queer gleam in his eyes.

But he went on as if he had not heard me. "There were other noises, some harsh, others majestically musical. There came to me the mighty roaring of a storm-swept sea beating against a rocky shore. The winds sobbed and thundered and whistled and fell away. Then I could hear the plaintive notes of sea-birds outside the stone walls of the monastery. But always it was the chill dampness that appalled me. I was forever hurrying toward the rose window, where warmth and love and joy awaited me;

but always it fled before me, and the long black corridor lay between me and my goal. It was horrible."

"What had you been doing, Tom?" I asked, in a desperate effort to recall him to his present environment. "Had you been eating a Welsh rare-bit at the club?"

He gazed at me defiantly. "No," he said, gloomily, "I had been playing Chopin with Signorina Molatti."

By an effort of will I restrained the words that rushed to my lips, and asked, quietly: "And which of his works had you been playing?"

"I don't know," he answered, wearily. "I think the signorina said our last rendition was No. 1 of Opus 40, whatever that may mean."

Tom glanced at me sheepishly, for all the world like a mischievous schoolboy who has been forced to make a confession. My mind was hard at work trying to recall the details of my recent researches into the life of Chopin. To refresh my memory I opened a book that lay among other Lives of "the master" on the library table.

"'No. 1 of Opus 40,'" I presently found myself reading aloud, "'is in A major, and is throughout an intensely martial composition. There is a spirit of victory and conquest about it. The most remarkable circumstance attached to it seems to lie in the fact that it is supposed to have been written during Chopin's sojourn at the Carthusian monastery on the Island of Mallorca with George Sand.'"

Bitterly did I regret my indiscreet quotation. Tom had turned white, and there had come into his eyes an appealing, despairing expression that reminded me of a deer I had once seen brought to bay in the Adirondack forest.

"Mrs. Van Corlear," announced the butler at the door of the library, and Mrs. Jack, who had the run of the house, came toward us gaily.

"And how is our boy wonder this evening?" she cried, laughingly. "I'm backing Tom Remsen for the great Chopin handicap to-night. Are you

quite fit, Tom? Do I get a run for my money?"

How easy it is for our most intimate friends to take our troubles lightly! Although I realized that underlying Mrs. Jack's levity was a kindly motive—a desire to carry off an awkward situation with the least possible friction—I could not help feeling annoyed at her flippant words. Grateful as I was to her for her loyal interest in my peculiar affliction, it was unpleasant to feel that Mrs. Jack was treating as a light comedy what seemed to me to involve all the elements of a tragedy. There was nothing farcical, surely, in Tom's appearance as he stood there, pale, silent, smiling perfunctorily at our guest, every inch a modern gentleman, but strangely like the protagonist of some classic drama, the rebellious but impotent plaything of vindictive gods.

"Come, let us go," I cried, nervously, anxious to put an end to a most uncomfortable situation. "Do you really feel up to it, Tom? There is still time to back out of it, you know. A solo before a crowd is much more trying than a duet in private."

I had not intended to hurt Tom's feelings, but my words had displayed a plentiful lack of tact. And the worst of it was that Mrs. Jack seemed to be in a diabolical mood, for she at once jumped at the chance to make mischief.

"I have heard of your fondness for duets, Tom," she remarked, and I was reminded of the soft purring of a cat preparing to pounce on a helpless mouse. "What a delight it must be to Signorina Molatti to find an interpreter of Chopin worthy of her fiddle! You find her a very interesting personality, do you not?"

Tom stopped short—we were slowly making our exit from the library—and gazed at Mrs. Jack with a puzzled expression in his eyes. "Signorina Molatti?" he queried, musingly. "What do I think of her? I really don't know. I never considered the question before.

She's merely a part of the music—not an individual, don't you see?" Suddenly his face changed, and he put his hand to his brow as if a sharp pain had tormented him. "Wait a moment! Don't go!" he implored us, in a labored, unnatural voice. "What does it all mean? Tell me! What am I doing? I can't play Chopin! I can't play anything! Have I been hypnotized? I tell you, Winifred—Mrs. Jack—it's all a mistake, a mystery, an uncanny, hideous bedevilment. It's demoniac possession—or something of that kind. And what'll the Chopin Society think if I make a horrible flunk? At this moment I don't feel as if I could play a note. Come into the music-room!" he ended, a touch of wildness in his voice and manner.

Mrs. Jack and I followed him silently. There was in Tom's way of hurrying across the drawing-room a mingling of eagerness and dread that was wholly uncharacteristic of the man. As he hastened feverishly toward the piano, a hectic flush on his cheeks and his eyes aglow, he reminded me of a youth I had seen at Monte Carlo staking his whole fortune on a turn of the roulette wheel.

For a time Tom sat at the instrument, his head bowed low and his hands hanging listlessly at his side. Mrs. Jack's arm was round my waist, and I could hear her deep, hurried breathing and feel the nervous tremor of her slender, well-knit form. It was indeed a most trying crisis that could disturb the poise of the athletic woman beside me.

"He doesn't connect," she whispered to me, presently. "I wish Dr. Woodruff were here."

But Mrs. Jack had spoken prematurely. Suddenly Tom's hands were raised and he struck the opening chords of Chopin's Scherzo in B minor, Opus 20. The fury of the following measures he rendered with stunning effect. Then the vigor of the rushing quaver figure lessened gradually, and at the repeat Tom sprang erect and turned toward us,

an expression of weird ecstasy on his face.

"It's all right, girls!" he cried, with a boyish lack of dignity. "Come on! We're late, as it is. I'll show those Chopin people something they'll never forget! Come on!"

"He's fit!" whispered Mrs. Jack to me. "It wasn't much of a preliminary canter—but he's in the running fast enough!"

VIII

THE CHOPIN SOCIETY

MOLATTI was a marvel of beauty that evening. Great as was my prejudice against the girl, I was forced to admit to myself, as we entered the crowded rooms of the Chopin Society, that I had never seen a handsomer creature, nor one more radiant with the joy of life. The glory of youth, the fire of genius were in her eyes. There were many striking faces in evidence that evening, faces full of the subtle charm that the worship of music frequently begets; ugly faces alight with an inward glow, symmetrical faces whose regularity was not insipid; plebeian faces stamped by an acquired distinction; patrician faces warmed by an esthetic enthusiasm; faces that told their story of struggle and defeat, and others that bore the mysterious imprint of success. But there was only one countenance in all that picturesque throng to which my gaze constantly returned, paying unwilling homage to a fascination against which I vainly rebelled. I found it difficult to believe that Tom had never noticed the signorina's wonderful beauty of face and form, that he had always considered her as he had said, "merely a part of the music."

Mrs. Jack, who had been watching me closely, seemed to read my mind, for she whispered to me, teasingly: "Tom'll sit up and take notice to-night, don't you think? She's well groomed and shows blood, doesn't she?"

From Mrs. Jack Van Corlear this

was high praise indeed, and Molatti deserved it. The studied simplicity of her low-cut black gown, relieved by a small cluster of diamonds below the neck, harmonized with the quiet arrangement of her luxuriant dark hair, seemingly held in place by a miniature aigrette of small diamonds. The marmoreal whiteness of her perfect neck and firm, well-rounded arms was emphasized by a sharp contrast. Of color there was none, save for the slight flush of health in her cheeks and the rich red line of her strong, sensitive mouth.

I glanced at Tom, who stood not far from me, listening to the words of the president of the society, a short, slender, nervous-looking man, whose mobile countenance at that moment suggested the joy of a lion-hunter who has achieved unexpectedly a difficult feat. Tom was pale, and there was a wrinkle in his brow just between the eyes that assured me he was not completely at his ease. But he seemed to be wholly indifferent to the presence of Signorina Molatti. That he had not glanced at her since our entrance to the hall I felt quite sure. Was Tom really a great actor? It was a question that was constantly recurring to me, despite the weight of evidence against an affirmative answer.

Presently Tom returned to my side, and Mrs. Jack deliberately stuck a pin into him—or, rather, us.

"Is music antagonistic to manners, Tom Remsen? Go over and speak to Signorina Molatti. It is your duty, sir."

"And my pleasure, Mrs. Jack," said Tom, with a smile that recalled his former self, my Tom of the ante-Chopin days. He left us at once to make his way through the crowd to Molatti's corner.

"I take it, madam, that that is your husband," remarked a deep, low, carefully modulated voice. I turned to find Dr. Emerson Woodruff beside me. "He doesn't look musical."

"No, but he is," Mrs. Jack put in, hastily. "We've heard him play to-

night, doctor. He's good for any distance—with something to spare. Mark my words, sir."

"Have you reached any conclusion about the case, Dr. Woodruff?" I whispered, nervously. "Mrs. Van Corlear is right. He was in splendid form just before we left home. He seemed to be delighted at the prospect of astonishing these people. But he had had a curious outbreak. He had remarked, rather wildly, that he was not a musician, couldn't play a note, and was, he believed, suffering from 'demoniac possession.'"

I saw that my statement had made a deep impression on the psychologist. His face was very grave as he watched Tom, who stood beside Molatti, evidently conversing with her with more vivacity than I had ever seen him display before.

"He's a phlegmatic, well-balanced man, in perfect health," muttered the doctor, musingly, "I am inclined to think," he went on, addressing me directly, "that your husband's case, madam, is the most remarkable that has ever come under my personal observation. I am very anxious to hear—and see—him play before saying anything further about it. You feel sure that he intends to perform to-night?"

Before I could answer this question I found myself beset by the fussy little president of the society, who appeared to believe that he owed me a great debt of gratitude.

"I tried to thank Mr. Remsen for coming here—to our so great joy!—but he referred me to you, madam. Oh, how much I owe you! And it is so charming to find the wife of a man of genius wholly in sympathy with his career. It is not always thus, you know, Mrs. Remsen."

I could feel the internal laughter that I knew Mrs. Jack was suppressing behind me. I longed to turn round and glare at her, but I was forced to smile down into the excited face of the Chopin enthusiast, who, *ex officio*, was my host for the evening.

"I trust you will not find Mr. Remsen a great disappointment," I

managed to say, weakly. For an instant a hot, almost irresistible inclination stung me to tell this overwrought, undersized bundle of nerves the plain truth, to assure him that Tom Remsen, my husband, couldn't tell a nocturne from a negro lullaby, that he was as ignorant of music as I was of law.

"I am sure," commented the president, politely, "that no disappointment awaits us—rather a great and holy joy. But I regret that our pleasure must be deferred for a few moments. Won't you and your friends find seats, please? I have prepared—at the request of the society—a short paper on 'The Personality of Chopin.' It will take not more than ten minutes for me to read it. After that, Mrs. Remsen, we are to have a most wonderful duet from Signorina Molatti and Mr. Remsen."

The little man disappeared, and I was glad to rest myself in the chair that Dr. Woodruff had found for me. I turned toward Mrs. Jack, who had seated herself beside me. She saw the gleam of annoyance in my eyes as they met hers, but smiled sweetly.

"Why are you angry with me, my dear?" she whispered. "Am I responsible if nature granted me a sense of humor? You must acknowledge that the situation is amusing—even if it is a bit uncanny."

Tom had seated himself beside Molatti to listen to the president's essay. Presently I found myself hearkening, with almost feverish interest, to the latter.

"I have thought it well, my friends," the president was saying, "to confine my remarks this evening to Chopin in his general relations to the world. I shall endeavor to draw a picture of the man rather than of the musician. And first of all, let me quote from Liszt in regard to the master's appearance."

I glanced at Tom. He sat motionless, almost rigid, with a face so lacking in expression that it was hard to believe he had caught the significance of the speaker's words.

"The ensemble of his person,'" quoted the president, "'was harmonious, and called for no special comment. His eye was more spiritual than dreamy; his bland smile never writhed into bitterness. The transparent delicacy of his complexion pleased the eye; his fair hair was soft and silky, his nose slightly aquiline, his bearing so distinguished and his manner stamped with so much of high breeding that involuntarily he was always treated *en prince*. He was generally gay; his caustic spirit caught the ridiculous rapidly, and far below the surface at which it usually strikes the eye. His gaiety was so much the more piquant because he always restrained it within the bounds of good taste, holding at a distance all that might tend to wound the most fastidious delicacy.'" To this quotation the president added a few words from Orłowski: "'Chopin is full of health and vigor; all the Frenchwomen dote on him, and all the men are jealous of him. In a word, he is the fashion, and we shall no doubt shortly have gloves *à la Chopin*.'"

The president paused, and I saw with consternation that he was glaring at my husband. The cause of this interruption was apparent at once as I shifted my gaze. Tom was rocking back and forth in his chair, shaking with laughter. His effort to keep his merriment in check, to restrain the loud guffaws that seemed to rack his very frame, was painfully in evidence. There was something almost heroic in his endeavor to repress an outbreak that would have been brutally rude. Tom had become the centre of all eyes through the president's lack of tact.

"What's the matter with him?" whispered Mrs. Jack, hysterically.

"I don't know," I answered, lamely. "He's had a funny thought. Is he better?" I had turned away from him.

"He's growing worse, I think," answered Mrs. Jack, despondently. "Why doesn't the president go on? There, it's all right. He's quiet now."

Mrs. Jack spoke truly. The president had resumed his lecture, and I turned and saw that Tom was no longer swaying with mirth.

"How did it happen?" I murmured in Mrs. Jack's ear.

"I'm not sure," she whispered, "but I think Molatti touched his hand. Oh, isn't it weird? I can't help feeling it's like breaking a colt."

IX

AN UNRECORDED OPUS

WHENEVER a number of men and women whose lives are devoted to some one line of art are gathered together the social atmosphere becomes surcharged with electricity. If one is impressionable, acutely sensitive to an environment, it is best perhaps to avoid the haunts of genius. I am inclined to believe that sociologists will investigate eventually the eternal antagonism between Belgravia and bohemia by strictly scientific methods. How large an infusion of genius can be safely sustained by a throng in search of social relaxation it would be well to know. One fact, at least, in this connection has been repeatedly demonstrated—as I had learned to my cost—namely, that a social function based on music rests on a powdermine. Belgravia had witnessed an explosion at my recent musical. And now, I felt convinced, bohemia was to undergo a like ordeal.

Tom was at the root of this quieting conviction. His hysterical attack of wholly irrelevant hilarity, his quick response to Molatti's soothing touch, and now the tense, unnatural expression of his face filled me with painful apprehension. I both craved and dreaded the end of the president's discourse, and my forebodings were darkened by a remark made by Mrs. Jack, who seemed to derive real pleasure from the excitement of the crisis.

"Look at Tom," she whispered. "He's fretful at the post. He'll get

the bit in his teeth, presently. Do you see Dr. Woodruff over there? He's taking notes."

Before she had ceased to speak Tom was out of hand and had bolted down the track, as Mrs. Jack would have put it. In other words, he had sprung from Molatti's side as the president ended his discourse and had rushed to the piano at the end of the room. I caught the look of amazement on the president's quaint face, and laughed aloud nervously. Utterly ashamed of my lack of self-control, I glanced at the crowd surrounding me, but nobody had noticed my touch of hysteria. Every eye in the room was fastened on Tom, who was seated motionless at the piano in an apparently dazed condition. His eyes were closed and the corners of his mouth drawn down. He looked at that moment like the very incarnation of all that was unmusical in the universe. I feared that Mrs. Jack would comment on his ridiculous appearance, but she was kind enough to keep quiet. She told me afterward that my raucous laugh had frightened her.

Suddenly Tom's chin went up, he opened his eyes, fixed them on Molatti's white face, and began to play. Such weird, intoxicating harmonies as filled the room, setting every soul therein athrob with an ecstasy that was close akin to agony, no earthly audience had ever heard before. Men and women were there who had memorized each and every note that Chopin wrote, but there was not among them one who could identify this marvelous improvisation, this strange exposition of a great master in his most inspired mood. It was Chopin, but Chopin unrecorded; his genius in its most characteristic tendency, but raised, as a mathematician would say, to the n^{th} power. It was as if the soul of the composer, dissatisfied with the heritage that he had left to us, had returned to earth to exhibit to his worshipers the one perfect flower of his creative spirit.

How long Tom played I have never known. I had forgotten all about

him before many minutes had passed, losing in my impressionability to music my sensitiveness as the wife of a man misunderstood. There were in the universe only my soul and a throbbing splendor of great music, mighty harmonies that filled all space, magic chords that awakened dim memories of a life long past, filled to overflowing with joy and sorrow, tossing waves of melody that bore me to the stars or sank with me into vast, mysterious realms peopled by gray shadows that I had learned to love.

Presently I felt Mrs. Jack's hand clasping mine. "Don't go to him, dear. He has only fainted," I heard her saying, her voice seeming to reach me from a remote distance. "He was all out, and collapsed under the wire. But it's nothing serious."

Tom had sunk back into Molatti's arms, and his head rested against her shoulder. She had sprung toward him, as I learned later, just in time to save him from a fall. She now stood gazing mournfully down on his white, upturned face, sorrow, pity and, I imagined, remorse in her glance. For an instant a hot rage swept over me, and I strove to stand erect despite Mrs. Jack's restraining hand.

"Don't make a scene!" she whispered to me, passionately in earnest. "He is in no danger. See, Dr. Woodruff is feeling his pulse."

Even at that awful moment, when I knew not whether Tom was alive or dead, I remember that my mind dwelt for a moment on the tendency of new schools of medicine to cling to old traditions. Of what significance to a psychologist could the rapidity of Tom's pulse be? I heard people all round me talking excitedly.

"Did you ever hear anything like it?"

"I tell you it's one of the master's posthumous works. I couldn't identify it, but perhaps it was discovered by Remsen."

"That's absurd! Where could he find it?"

"He's better now. See, he opens his eyes."

"I don't wonder he fainted; I was just on the verge of collapse myself."

"*Parbleu! Chopin à la diable! Non, non, no more pour moi, s'il vous plaît!*"

"I can now die so vera happy! I hava justa once heard the *maestro* himself. I hava nothing left for to live."

"Who is this wonderful Remsen? Never heard of him before."

"You'll hear of him again, then. He's the only man living who can interpret the master."

It was, all of it, intolerable. How I hated these chattering idiots, who were making an idol of clay, setting up my poor Tom—who was to me at that moment an object of pity—as the incarnation of their cult, to whom they must pay reverent homage! I longed to cry aloud to them that they had been tricked, that my husband was a sensible, commonplace, lovable man, as far removed from a musical crank as he was from a train-robber or a pirate. All my former love for music seemed to have turned suddenly into detestation, and I longed to get away from this nest of Chopiniacs into the noisy, wholesome atmosphere of the outside world. It seemed to me that nothing could restore my equilibrium but the uproar of the streets and the unmelodious clatter of my coach.

"We must get out of this at once," I said to Mrs. Jack, standing erect and checking the dizziness in my head by an effort of will. I saw that Tom had fully recovered his senses and that he seemed to be actually enjoying the homage the excited throng pressing toward him offered to his vicarious genius. Beside him stood Molatti, her face radiant, as if her mission on earth were to reflect the glory of Tom Remsen's musical miracle.

"We must get out of this," I found myself saying again, as I urged Mrs. Jack toward the exit. "I'll send the carriage back for Tom."

"But it's such bad form to run

away like this," protested Mrs. Jack. "What will the president think of us? And Dr. Woodruff! Surely you want to ask him what he thinks of the—ah—case."

But my will for the time being was stronger than hers, and presently we were seated in my carriage homeward bound, and I was fighting back the hot tears that had rushed to my eyes.

"I—I—don't care what—what Dr. Woodruff thinks about the—the case," I sobbed. "I—I—know what I think about it."

Mrs. Jack said nothing for a time, but it was pleasant to feel the pressure of her hand and to realize that she could be tactful now and again.

We had nearly reached the house before she ventured to ask: "And what, my dear, do you think of the case?"

I pulled myself together and restrained my sobs. I am not of the weeping variety of woman, and I was ashamed of my hysterical exhibition of weakness.

"I think," I began, and then I hesitated, weighing my words carefully—"I think that Signorina Molatti is in love with Tom."

Mrs. Jack laughed outright, both to my amazement and anger. "You've wholly lost the scent, my dear," she remarked, while I removed my hand from hers. "Signorina Molatti is not in love with Tom—she's in love with Chopin."

X

TOM'S RECOVERY

AFTER rereading the foregoing deposition I am forced to the conclusion that I was designed by nature neither for a novelist nor a historian. I can see that my narrative fails to be convincing, considered either as a work of fiction or as a statement of fact. But may I not comfort myself with the thought that I have given my testimony conscientiously, and that if the outcome of my literary efforts is unsatisfactory my failure is due rather to the inexplicable phenomena with

which I have been obliged to deal than to my own defects as an annalist and witness? I have endeavored to inscribe simply and in chronological order the unadorned tale of my husband's sudden attack of genius and its consequences, and I realize now that my data will not be accepted by the scientific, nor will their arrangement appeal to the artistic. But I have told the truth, and if not the whole truth, at least nothing but the truth. As literature my story belongs to the realistic school and is of the present. As a contribution to science it will have no standing to-day, but I am firmly convinced that the psychologists of the future will read the details of Tom Remsen's case with enlightened interest.

I have felt too deeply the nervous strain of setting down in black and white the story of the greatest crisis in my life to go into details here and now regarding the ups and downs of the long illness that Tom underwent after his triumphant appearance before the Chopin Society.

For two days before he collapsed I saw that he was fighting in grim silence against weakness and fever. He was like a man struggling to overcome an unnatural appetite and growing constantly more weary of the contest. He would stroll with reluctant steps into the music-room, stand for a time gazing defiantly at the piano, with his hands clenched and beads of perspiration on his troubled brow; then he would turn away, meeting my gaze with a melancholy smile, and hurry off to his office or his club, to return to me after a time pale and listless, but always stubbornly silent as to the cause of his evident suffering. Only once before he was forced to take to his bed, where he tossed for a week in delirium, did he refer, even indirectly, to the cause of his disquietude.

"Has Signorina Molatti been here to-day?" he asked me, abruptly, one evening at dinner.

"No, Tom," I answered, a note in my voice that I'm sure he did not like. "Did you expect her?"

"I always expect her," he muttered, speaking more to himself than to me.

That evening the magnetism of the open piano in the music-room proved irresistible to him. To my mingled consternation and delight he played selections from Chopin until long after midnight, the while I sat behind him fascinated by his renditions but appalled by the persistent recurrence of his "seizures." "To-morrow," I said to myself, "I will consult Dr. Woodruff again. Perhaps he has made his diagnosis and can suggest some line of treatment."

But on the morrow Tom was in charge of our family doctor and two trained nurses. The morning had found him hot with fever, and by noon he was out of his head and inclined to be violent. Then followed days and nights of alternating hope and fear, during which there came to me a complete revelation of what the old Tom had been to me, the Tom who had bored me at times—ungrateful woman that I was!—by his practical, unimaginative, inartistic personality. How I treasured a word of encouragement from the doctor or a nurse! How bitterly I repented my former discontent, my disloyal longing for something in Tom's make-up that nature had not vouchsafed to him! It had come to him—this "something"—and it had well-nigh ruined our lives. Whatever it had been, demoniac possession, hypnotism or what-not, it had been a thing of evil, despite the uncanny beauty of its manifestation. In my heart of hearts I craved one of two alternatives, either Tom's death or his restoration to his former self, freed forever from the black shadow of Chopin's genius.

It was not until one afternoon well on in his convalescence that I knew my fondest hopes had been realized. We had betaken ourselves to the library, not to read but to enjoy in an indolent way our new freedom from trained nurses and the discipline of the sickroom. Tom, leaning back comfortably in a reclining-chair and

puffing a cigarette, wore on his invalid's face an expression of supreme contentment. Not once, I was glad to note, did his eyes wander to the distant shelf on which stood our Chopin literature, books that I had doomed in my mind to an *auto-da-fé* when a fitting opportunity for the sacrifice should arise.

"Isn't this cozy?" remarked Tom presently, glancing at me affectionately. "But I suppose I must hasten my recovery, my dear. The Pepper and Salt Trust and other enterprises don't take much stock in sick men."

"Don't worry about business matters, Tom Remsen," I said, with playful sternness. "We can get on very well if you never do another stroke of work in your life."

A shadow passed over Tom's face, and he puffed his cigarette nervously. "I'm not fitted for a life of leisure, my dear," he remarked, grimly. "A man may get into so many kinds of mischief if he isn't busy."

I hastened to change the subject. "Remember, sir, that you are under orders. You are to do as you are told to do. You may not know it, Tom, but the fact is that you and I sail for Europe just as soon as you are strong enough to stand the voyage."

"Where are we going?" he asked, apprehensively. "Not to Paris?"

"No, not to Paris," I answered, understanding him. "We'll spend all our time in Scotland and Ireland. They're the only countries over there that we have not seen, Tom."

The next day I discharged our butler for an indiscretion that he committed at this moment.

"Signorina Molatti," he announced from the doorway of the library, and turning my head I saw the violiniste, with her Cremona under her arm, coming toward us. I glanced at Tom. The two red spots that had leaped into his white cheeks seemed to be an outward manifestation not of joy but of hot anger. I rose and went toward our visitor, a question in my face.

"Will you not forgive me, signora?"

cried Molatti, in soft, pleading tones. "Eet ees what you calla vera bad form, but I hava been so vera unhappy. They tolda me that Signor Remsen was dying. Can you not forgive me?"

"But he is on the road to recovery, signorina," I said, perfunctorily. It would not do to give way to my inclination to chide this insinuating girl for her presumption. A scene might cause Tom to have a relapse.

"I see," she cried. "And I am so glad! And I hava brought my violin. That the signor would lika to hear the voice of the *maestro*—"

"Stop right there, will you—ah—signorina," exclaimed Tom, gruffly, endeavoring, as I saw, to control his annoyance and show no discourtesy to even an unwelcome guest. "I'm not it, young woman. He's gone away, whoever he was. If he comes back—which God forbid—I'll notify you. But you won't catch me drumming any more on a piano. My musical career is at an end. I'm under the care of a doctor, and he says that I'm on the road to recovery. Forgive me if I have spoken too plainly. You're a very charming young woman, and I admire you—ah—genius. But mine's gone, and I'll take good care that it doesn't come back. If you'd like that piano in the music-room, Signorina Molatti, I'm sure that my wife would be glad to send it over to your apartments. We're through with it—forever!"

I was sorry for the girl. The expression of amazement—even horror—that had come into her dark, expressive face touched my heart, and I laid my hand gently on her arm.

"It's a great mystery, signorina," I whispered to her, as I led her from the library. "I can't explain it to you very clearly, for I don't understand it myself. But Mr. Remsen told you the truth. He is no longer musical. In his normal condition he is the most unmusical man in the world. The Signor Remsen that you have known, with whom you have played duets, is dead—I can hardly believe that he ever existed. Will

you, Signorina Molatti, grant me the great privilege of presenting to you yonder piano? Frankly, it would be a great relief to me to be rid of it."

There were tears in her splendid black eyes as she turned her face toward me. "I do not understand," she said, mournfully. "You do not know whata it all meant to me. I cannot taka your piano. There is nobody in the wide world to playa eet, now that he ees gone. And you are telling me the truth? I was dreaming? Eet did not really happen? But, signora, there were so many who hearda heem—hearda me—hearda us! Eet could not hava been a dream. Whata was eet?"

Her voice broke with a sob, and I bent down and kissed her tear-stained face.

"I cannot tell you, signorina. But do not let your heart break. You may find him again some day."

"Nevaire again," she sighed, seizing my hands impulsively. "Nevaire again. But I thanka you so much. Fareawell."

My heart was heavy as I returned to Tom, uncertain of the state in which I should find him. To my delight, I saw as I entered the library that he had suddenly made a great stride toward renewed health. He was sitting erect, and there was little of the invalid in his face or voice.

"That's over, my dear!" he cried, gaily, "and I'm going to celebrate Chopin's utter rout. Order me a brandy and soda, will you?—and push that box of cigars toward me. Then we'll read up a bit, little woman, about Scotland and Ireland. On the whole, I'm inclined to believe you and I will have a very jolly outing."

I leaned forward and kissed the dear fellow's smiling lips. "It's so good to have you back again, Tom," I murmured.

"And the signorina?" he asked, presently. "How did she take it? I'm afraid I was cruel to her, my dear. Did I speak too harshly to her?"

"You had no alternative, Tom," I assured him, soothingly; "you had been placed in a very awkward position."

"I had—in a very awkward position," he acknowledged. "And who the deuce put me there? I wonder——"

"Don't wonder, Tom," I cried, sharply. "The less wondering you do the better it will be for us both."

"You're right, Winifred, as you always are," he said, raising aloft the glass of bubbling brandy that the butler had brought to him, and nodding toward me. "Here's your good health, my dear, and *bon voyage* to us both!"



LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM

MADGE—He says I am a hot-house flower.

MARJORIE—Is that why he keeps you so long in the conservatory?



NOT A GOOD CATCH

MRS. MATCHMAKER—Don't you know, my dear, that all are fish that come to my net?

DAUGHTER—But, mamma, you want me to marry a lobster!

PIERROT IN AUTUMN

WHY is thy heart so sad, Pierrot?
 The leaf must fall, the Summer go,
 And our bright world be given to snow,
 Since the good God will have it so.

My heart is sad enough, Pierrette!
 The Autumn days are warm, and yet
 The world is like a house to let,
 Empty of all things save regret.

Let not thy heart be sad, Pierrot!
 The Spring will come, the Winter go,
 And we be glad again; for woe
 Is but joy's covering of snow.

Will some Toymaker, then, reset
 Our fairy stageland for us yet,
 And mend each broken marionette?
 Where is our vanished friend, Pierrette?

BLISS CARMAN.



METHOD IN HER MODESTY

"AND did you blush, Clara, when he said that?"
 "Oh, no indeed, dear; it was too dark."



GETTING A START

CHUMPLY—They say the Ripleys are trying to break into society.
 CLUBLY—Yes, that is the rumor. They have started well. Mrs.
 Rigley made three breaks at the Browne-Stone reception last night.



AT THE ZOO

THE MONK—Five baby elks have been born here within the last four weeks.
 THE COCKATOO—By George! we'll organize a lodge.

THE CASTLE-BUILDER

Anonymous

CHARACTERS

MR. FALCONER	<i>Fifty. Man of the world, handsome, polished, well-dressed.</i>
LYON FALCONER	<i>Twenty. His son. Tall, aristocratic, simple in manner, serious, romantic type.</i>
HERMIONE FALCONER	<i>Nineteen. Girlish, slender, lovely, reserved, dressed with elegance.</i>
LADY KATE BEAUMONT	<i>Forty. Dark, handsome, gay, chic.</i>
DOWAGER DUCHESS OF LAUDERDALE	<i>Seventy. A commanding personage.</i>
DUKE OF LAUDERDALE	<i>Twenty-two. Her grandson. Narrow shoulders, small, insignificant; light-red hair; dressed in height of fashion, monocle.</i>
MRS. SHARSWOOD	<i>Forty-five. Dame de compagnie of Hermione Falconer, cowed in manner, ill-dressed.</i>
NETTIE SHARSWOOD	<i>Twenty-five. Vivacious, candid in appearance, plainly but daintily dressed.</i>
HERBERT FORBES	<i>Thirty. Falconer's private secretary.</i>

A ROYAL GENTLEMAN; HIS EQUERRY; TWO COUNTRY GENTLEMEN, NEIGHBORS; LACQUEYS, FOOTMEN, GARDENERS, MEN AND MAID SERVANTS.

The scenes are laid at Melville Moat, in Leicestershire, England—large, rambling house of sixteenth century, great luxury, splendid grounds, fine terraces and gardens—and at Brentwood, in Surrey, the Duchess of Lauderdale's country seat.

LIBRARY at Melville Moat. Lofty apartment. Fire in grate. Books everywhere. Mr. Falconer. Herbert Forbes. Mr. Falconer sits at a wide, flat desk covered with papers; wears a rough morning suit, knickerbockers. 11 A.M.

FALCONER

Here, Forbes, you can make out the list of the house party. We shall be twenty. The Lauderdale's arrive

to-day. Lady Beaumont also. The rest come three days later. Her Grace and Lady Beaumont asked to be here *en famille*—a whim. (Smiles.) I never deny women's whims.

FORBES

Have you letters for me to answer?

FALCONER

Yes, here—these—no important ones. I have myself written Prettyman to cable to New York about that

investment I spoke to you of last night. It looks a good thing. You can go.

Forbes leaves the room, carrying papers.

FALCONER (*leaning back with his hands behind his head*)

To-morrow I shall be fifty. A half-century of life! I suppose, to carry out Scriptural theories, I should be one of the unhappiest of mortals, since money, we are told, is a curse, not a benediction. Well, I confess mine has not weighed too heavily on my conscience. I have carried out nearly all I intended. I can now enjoy the fruits of my assiduous planings. Since my youth I have had, like all thoughtful people, no slovenly, but definite aims. At twenty I adopted the motto, "*Jouir et mépriser*"—enjoy and despise! The key to life! Republics are said to be ungrateful. I don't know whether they are or not. *My country*, at any rate, never valued my services. I shook its dust from my feet. I hate it, and I hate everybody in it. Patriotism is the chimera of narrow intellects. My adopted country suits me. I like its climate, the submission of menials, the manner in which children are educated and made amenable to their parents. Above all, this place delights me. I have at least had the courage of my convictions. My new life holds no regrets and no remorse. Leave these to feeble intelligences and vacillating wills. Hermione never understood me—she always opposed my projects, which, after all, were for our children. Only where primogeniture exists can one find a family, the natural outcome of such wealth as ours. In those three letters to her relatives which I opened, read and destroyed I did my best for her. The doctors advised, in her nervous condition, rest and absolute seclusion. Her complaints to her relatives would not have been understood. Better she should have thought them forgetful and indifferent than have them fall about our ears. Her mind was

no doubt slightly affected when she imagined this place didn't agree with her health. Her physicians assured me it was entirely salubrious. Her final homesickness, her longing to return to America to her own people, was a mere matter of weakness—a woman's irritation at being thwarted in anything—an hallucination of fever. She had always been a spoilt child. Congenial we never were. Our tastes, our ideas, were dissimilar. I have always had the energy to face the truth. Agathon cannot refute the truth, though Socrates is easily refuted. Ah, I neglect the ancients. . . . Let me find the "*Dialogues*." (*Goes to a bookcase. Absorbs himself in a volume.*)

Lyon Falconer pushes open the door.

LYON

Father!

FALCONER

My son!

LYON

Can I speak with you a moment?

FALCONER (*laying down his book and returning to his desk*)

Certainly, my boy.

LYON (*gravely*)

I have something of importance to say to you.

FALCONER (*smiling*)

You want me to buy for you Lauderdale's mare? You've spent more than your allowance—or is it—er—a love affair? (*Laughs.*)

LYON (*still serious*)

None of these.

FALCONER (*aside*)

It can't be a scrape—he was never known to get into one. (*To Lyon.*) Well, out with it, then!

LYON (*hesitating*)

I almost fear to speak, as I know it will be to you a disappointment.

FALCONER (*still laughing*)

Bless me, my son, I never knew you so afraid of your dad before.

LYON

I want to go to Africa.

FALCONER (*lightly*)

Well, well, we'll see; perhaps a little run there and back for your vacation. I don't know but it might interest me to go, too. I was in the Transvaal when I was thirty. Joined some explorers. We might get the yacht put into shape——

LYON (*still gravely*)

I wish to go to the war.

FALCONER (*frowning*)

What arrant nonsense are you talking?

LYON

It isn't nonsense. All the fellows are going.

FALCONER (*sternly*)

What fellows?

LYON (*haughtily*)

The gentlemen. I don't mean the tailors' apprentices, but my friends.

FALCONER

Give up your last term? Leave your studies, of which I have felt so justly proud? Your record is excellent—to be shot down like a dog by a pack of crazy Dutchmen!

LYON

A plucky enemy.

FALCONER (*raising one hand in deprecation*)

Mere skirmishers.

LYON

The Queen has ordered——

FALCONER (*glaring*)What has *she* got to do with it?

LYON

The Queen wants——

FALCONER

Damn the . . .

LYON

!

FALCONER (*uneasily*)

It's damned folly, I mean. Why, when all is said, this isn't my country.

LYON

You have wished to make it mine.

FALCONER

Within limits.

LYON (*hotly*)

Those of cowardice?

FALCONER

Tut, tut!

LYON

Do you know what it means to deny me?

FALCONER

I cannot see——

LYON

Probably not. You are an American, not an Englishman.

Falconer makes an angry movement.

LYON

But if I had been a Yankee I'd have shouldered my musket and gone to Cuba or the Philippines.

FALCONER (*angrily*)

You're a young fool.

LYON

It means ruin for me in the opinion of my set.

FALCONER

Is Lauderdale going?

LYON (*laughing*)

Oh, he's not fit.

FALCONER

They'd be glad enough to have him.

LYON

Oh, because he's a duke—well, perhaps—but physically he's not valid.

FALCONER (*anxiously*)

For what?

LYON (*laughing*)

They tell queer stories.

FALCONER

You seem amused. I don't see the joke.

LYON (*gravely*)

In this matter there is no joke. To refuse your consent, to throw obstacles in my path is to make me a laughing stock, degrade me before my class, ruin my future (*with emotion*), break my heart! Think it over, father. I will leave you now. (*Goes out.*)

FALCONER (*throwing up one arm*)
What an earthquake!

II

An apartment at Melville Moat. Afternoon. Dowager Duchess of Lauderdale. The Duke of Lauderdale. The Duchess sits on a sofa. The Duke stands before the fire, his hands under his coat tails.

THE DUCHESS

He will give her an enormous dowry.

LAUDERDALE

How much?

THE DUCHESS

In the millions.

LAUDERDALE (*fretful*)

How many? It's only dollars.

THE DUCHESS

Don't be silly! It wouldn't be decent to make exorbitant demands just at first.

LAUDERDALE (*insistent*)

Has he said how many?

THE DUCHESS

No, not in round numbers. It's been hinted at. The Sharswood woman told me—

LAUDERDALE (*interested*)

Darling girl, the Sharswood.

THE DUCHESS

What!—that scrag?

LAUDERDALE

Ha, ha, ha! I mean—er—Nettie.

THE DUCHESS

Oh, the daughter! (*Scowls.*) And where have you seen her, pray?

LAUDERDALE

In the garden, yesterday and this morning.

THE DUCHESS (*anxiously*)

Did she say anything?

LAUDERDALE

Lots. (*Titters.*)

THE DUCHESS

How much will he give?

LAUDERDALE (*grinning*)

Look here, grandma, you must think me an ass.

THE DUCHESS (*sighing*)

They all know why we're here.

LAUDERDALE

I don't, then.

THE DUCHESS (*tragically*)

Do you intend to kill me?

LAUDERDALE (*aside*)

Tough job.

THE DUCHESS

A magnificent dowry. You can make over Brentwood and buy in Muriel Towers. You can stop putting your hand in my pocket and ruining your sister's chances.

LAUDERDALE (*under his breath*)

Darling little girl!

THE DUCHESS

A sweet face, pretty hair. The father looks Jewish. They say he isn't. One can never tell with these new people. "Falconer" may mean—anything. She isn't very smart, though she wears good clothes. Seems rather dull. It's just as well; with my guidance and Laura's—

LAUDERDALE

Hang Laura!

THE DUCHESS

Don't speak so of your sister! Modern men have no manners.

LAUDERDALE

She's always eavesdropping and repeating and making a fuss.

THE DUCHESS

She deplotes your extravagance.

LAUDERDALE

My extravagance! Good Lord! Why, I owe a lot of money now and can't rake up a copper—debts of honor.

THE DUCHESS

How much?

LAUDERDALE (*laughing*)

Well, not in the millions.

THE DUCHESS

Do you intend to pay your court or not? I won't be made a fool of.

LAUDERDALE

Go ahead.

THE DUCHESS

And you'll play no tricks?

LAUDERDALE (*his hand on his heart*)

Strike the old fellow's pile—that's what the Americans call it. I'm ready to spend it.

THE DUCHESS

You are never serious.

LAUDERDALE

Let me off now, grandma. I've got an engagement.

THE DUCHESS (*smiling*)

With Hermione?

LAUDERDALE (*giggling*)

No, with the other one.

THE DUCHESS

I thought she was an only daughter.

LAUDERDALE

With Nettie.

THE DUCHESS (*shaking her finger at him*)

Let that girl alone!

LAUDERDALE

Ta-ta, grandmother. (*Goes out.*)

THE DUCHESS

Of course it's a *mésalliance* for us, but they say the mother's people were Virginians, old Southern chivalry and that sort of thing. The girl's lady-like, the father's presentable; an educated person, though tiresome.

III

A servant enters.

SERVANT

Will your Grace receive Mr. Falconer?

THE DUCHESS

Ask him in.

Mr. Falconer enters.

FALCONER

I hope your Grace is made comfortable.

THE DUCHESS

Perfectly; this place is delightful. (*They sit.*)

FALCONER

I have arranged it to my taste. I will take you later to the hospice and chapel. Hermione expects you to tea in the library in half an hour. Lady Kate Beaumont arrives.

THE DUCHESS

Charming woman.

FALCONER

An old friend of mine.

THE DUCHESS

Indeed!

FALCONER

I knew her in America, in my youth and hers.

THE DUCHESS

Fancy! Why did you leave America?

FALCONER (*smiling*)

This question is put to me exactly three hundred and sixty-five times a year. I answer it always in the same way; a question of climate.

THE DUCHESS

You like our climate?

FALCONER (*still smiling*)

I like—er—dampness.

THE DUCHESS

Ah! Your children are almost English.

FALCONER

Entirely so.

THE DUCHESS

They were very young when you came?

FALCONER

Yes.

THE DUCHESS

Your girl is quite lovely.

FALCONER

I think her so.

THE DUCHESS

You will marry her in England?

FALCONER

There is no haste.

THE DUCHESS

It's so boring. One had best get through it early.

FALCONER

A man alone finds these things delicate and difficult.

THE DUCHESS (*suavely*)

You ought to get some clever woman to help you.

FALCONER (*gallantly*)

I put myself in your hands, my dear lady.

THE DUCHESS (*aside*)

He isn't so bad. (*To Falconer.*) I'll confess to you at once my grandson's quite wild about her.

FALCONER (*vaguely*)

She is very young — undeveloped—

THE DUCHESS

So is he, a mere lad, but I desire he shall settle early.

FALCONER

Ah!

THE DUCHESS

I am getting old. I was left with my poor son's children on my hands. I hope to see them established before I die.

Falconer bows and remains silent.

THE DUCHESS (*aside*)

He is determined to play his fish. (*To Falconer.*) Your children do not

resemble you. I suppose they take after their mother.

FALCONER

Yes.

THE DUCHESS

I have heard she was very handsome.

FALCONER

She was called so.

THE DUCHESS

How sad she should have died so young, with everything to live for!

FALCONER (*perfunctorily*)

A great shock!

THE DUCHESS

And girls need a mother's tact in the present muddled state of society.

FALCONER

My wife was a simple person, not worldly. I—

THE DUCHESS (*smiling*)

You should marry. You doubtless will.

FALCONER (*with conviction*)

Never!

THE DUCHESS

Fancy!

FALCONER

So few women understand men. (*Laughs.*)

THE DUCHESS

There is Lady Kate. She understands men.

FALCONER

If any woman can.

THE DUCHESS

You say you knew her in youth?

FALCONER

Yes; well.

THE DUCHESS

As a girl?

FALCONER

Before she married Beaumont. Our parents' country places adjoined.

THE DUCHESS

Ah! And she is now coming here?

FALCONER

She has accepted—arrives in an hour.

THE DUCHESS

Have you seen much of her since?

FALCONER

No. We have met, of course, casually, at balls and routs. During my wife's lifetime we traveled a great deal on the Continent. I have hardly exchanged three words with Lady Kate for—let me see—nearly half a lifetime.

THE DUCHESS

How interesting! (*Aside.*) Kate'll be on my side. I married her girl for her.

FALCONER

I heard your Grace had a hand in her daughter's marriage.

THE DUCHESS (*smiling*)

I helped it on. The girl was very smart looking. It was a walk-over with the batch that came out that year. She's a success.

FALCONER (*laughing*)

In New England smart means sharp.

THE DUCHESS

You and your children don't talk American.

FALCONER (*wincing*)

We do our best.

THE DUCHESS (*condescending*)

Your girl will be smart—er—when she gets over her timidity.

FALCONER

I dislike bold maidens.

THE DUCHESS

Oh, shyness is out of date. (*Aside.*) One must run down his wares a little.

FALCONER

At the Drawing Room my little girl did very well. She has probably better blood in her veins than half the others who pushed past the Royalties.

THE DUCHESS (*distracted*)

Ah!

FALCONER

The Falcons are descended from the de Faucons—old Norman barons who—

THE DUCHESS

Where did they make their money?

FALCONER

A younger son crossed with a set of gay, adventurous youths, and—

THE DUCHESS

I heard it was snuff.

FALCONER

You heard wrong. My grandfather had great landed interests—made large real-estate transactions. He—

THE DUCHESS (*interested*)

Struck oil. (*Laughs.*)

FALCONER (*stiffly*)

There was never any oil. The Falcons were always—gentlemen.

THE DUCHESS (*aside*)

He's a bore. What do I care for the Falcons?

FALCONER (*boldly*)

If my little girl marries to suit me, I don't care if I give her twenty millions. If she stays with me I'll keep her in comfort. (*Laughs.*) If she marries against my will, not a shilling.

THE DUCHESS

Dear me!

FALCONER

I have inculcated obedience. American children are shockingly brought up. You in England train your children admirably. Hermione is amenable, ingenuous, with no intricacies of character.

THE DUCHESS (*aside*)

And Aminta Lucas, who ran away with her groom, and my precious grandson, who's at this moment, I warrant, engaged in gulling the housekeeper's daughter! Mr. Falconer has illusions. Let us hope he has none about his girl. (*To Falconer.*) Yes, we think respect for parents important, and insist upon it.

Lauderdale enters.

LAUDERDALE

Hullo, grannie! Have you got any cigarettes?

THE DUCHESS

Don't you see Mr. Falconer?

LAUDERDALE

How do?

FALCONER

!

Lauderdale turns his back to Falconer, takes a match from the table, and lights a cigarette.

LAUDERDALE

Lend me twenty pounds, will you, grandma?

THE DUCHESS (*affecting suavity*)

What do you want twenty pounds for?

LAUDERDALE

We are playing piquet.

THE DUCHESS

I have no change.

FALCONER (*drily*)

I can accommodate you. (*Hands him twenty pounds.*)

Lauderdale takes it without thanks, puffing his cigarette in Falconer's face.

LAUDERDALE

By-bye. (*Goes out.*)

IV

Large drawing-room at Melville Moat furnished with great elegance. At a tea table on the left Nettie Sharswood is making tea. She and Lauderdale are scuffling amiably over a piece of sugar. On a pouffe in the centre of the room sit, side by side, the Duchess and Hermione. At the right a piano. Lady Kate sits before it fluttering music. Falconer leans over her. Livered menservants move about noiselessly, lighting candles, arranging fires, bringing tea things.

NETTIE (*at the tea table*)

You can't have any.

LAUDERDALE

Why, I wonder?

NETTIE

It'll make you fat.

LAUDERDALE

Is that what makes you fat?

NETTIE

I'm thinner than a nail.

LAUDERDALE

Plump little throat.

NETTIE (*primly*)

Does your Grace take cream?

LAUDERDALE

Oh, I say, you know, don't.

NETTIE

Don't what?

LAUDERDALE

That. Call me "Tot;" everybody does.

NETTIE (*very low*)

Well, Tot, then, do you take cream?

LAUDERDALE

Yes, and honey when I can get it.

NETTIE (*looking about the table*)

Sorry there isn't any.

LAUDERDALE

Plenty in sight.

NETTIE (*still looking about candidly*)

Where?

LAUDERDALE

On your lips. (*Catches her hand under the table.*)

THE DUCHESS (*on the pouffe*)

And do you like England?

HERMIONE

Yes.

THE DUCHESS

Better than America?

HERMIONE (*hesitatingly*)

I hardly know America.

THE DUCHESS

I was once at Newport, and adored it.

HERMIONE

Yes?

THE DUCHESS

You were a little girl when you left?

HERMIONE

Yes.

THE DUCHESS

Did your mamma die here?

HERMIONE

Yes.

THE DUCHESS

You were named after her?

HERMIONE

Yes, her name was Hermione.

THE DUCHESS

Quite lovely.

Pause.

THE DUCHESS

How pretty your hair is! My grandson admires it.

HERMIONE

My hair?

THE DUCHESS

Yes, he's mad over it.

HERMIONE

Mad?

THE DUCHESS (*laughing*)

A form of expression; he raves about you.

Laughter from the tea table.

NETTIE (*to Lauderdale*)

Oh, don't, please!

THE DUCHESS (*severely*)

I don't like that Miss Sharswood's manners.

HERMIONE

She's an English girl.

THE DUCHESS

Low-born.

HERMIONE

Her mother's a first cousin of the Earl of Shaftsbury.

THE DUCHESS

Pshaw!

HERMIONE

Nettie visits her here sometimes.

THE DUCHESS

She doesn't live here?

HERMIONE

No.

THE DUCHESS

I hope, my dear, you will smile on my boy.

HERMIONE

Why?

THE DUCHESS (*aside*)

Is she half-witted? (*To Hermione.*) Why, because it would make him—make us all so happy.

LADY KATE (*at the piano*)

Here is the old song.

FALCONER

Sing it.

LADY KATE

Another time, not now. I must brush up the accompaniment. (*Plays a few chords.*)

FALCONER

How it recalls the past! It is like a perfume you have about you. Music—odor—one goes back twenty years.

LADY KATE

Why should you, who have attained all your desires, want to go back?

FALCONER

There are things that haunt the memory. Our walks at Nutwood, for instance. What delight!

LADY KATE (*archly*)

Before or after Beaumont's arrival?

FALCONER

Before.

LADY KATE

How old it makes me feel!

FALCONER

You look twenty-five.

LADY KATE

By candle-light.

FALCONER

You know you treated me badly.

LADY KATE

What would you have? . . . I was inexperienced. (*Aside.*) I didn't know the worth of money, then.

FALCONER

You threw me over to be Lady Beaumont.

LADY KATE

Much good it did me!

FALCONER

You have soared high.

LADY KATE (*aside*)

Yes, and grubbed low.

FALCONER

It was very kind of you to come to us.

LADY KATE (*smiling*)

It's a nice place to come to.

FALCONER (*deprecatingly*)

We do what we can.

LADY KATE

You must show me everything.

FALCONER

Charmides says temperance is quietude. I get it here.

LADY KATE (*aside*)

He always was a prig.

FALCONER

Yet a man is lonely without—

LADY KATE

What?

FALCONER

Another mind.

LADY KATE

Mind?

FALCONER

And heart—

LADY KATE

Ah!

FALCONER

To lean upon—to trust—to sympathize in all one's failures, all one's regrets.

LADY KATE

You'll find no difficulty, I imagine,

in providing yourself with a brain, heart, lungs and all the other—er—commodities.

FALCONER (*aside*)

She always did rouse a devil in me. She is unchanged. (*To Lady Kate.*) I have dreamed of a tie that would yet be no bondage.

LADY KATE (*aside*)

What a hypocrite! (*To Falconer.*) A congenial marriage, eh?

FALCONER (*shrugging his shoulders*)

Marriage is a stupidity very well for washerwomen and costermongers.

LADY KATE

Barmaids make the best here.

FALCONER

Exactly—the convention has been debased.

LADY KATE

Develop your theories; they are amusing.

FALCONER

I would put my life at a woman's feet. She should have no rivals, but—

LADY KATE

She must remain in cheap London lodgings and drive in cabs, while you and your girl splash by in your equipages; nice program—for her!

FALCONER

You do me gross injustice. I—

LADY KATE

You pay well? (*Rises.*)

FALCONER

You were always so positive.

LADY KATE (*with meaning*)

Yes, I am not like you—romantic. (*She moves away.*)

FALCONER (*following her*)

You are very beautiful.

LADY KATE

Oh, so so.

FALCONER

Always the same.

LADY KATE

Yes, hard up.

FALCONER

But this need not be.

LADY KATE

No, you are right there. (*Approaches the pouffe.*) Miss Falconer, will you give me some tea?

THE DUCHESS (*low, to Lady Kate*)

Talk up Tot.

LADY KATE

I'll do all I can.

THE DUCHESS

I'm working your game.

LADY KATE (*staring*)

Mine?

THE DUCHESS

I think we understand each other perfectly.

FALCONER (*aside*)

Her old spirit. I thought her straits would have crushed them. Hermione seems completely cowed by the Duchess. It's revolting, after all the advantages that girl has had. No powers of conversation; just like her mother — monosyllabic and *en-tête*.

HERMIONE (*at the tea table*)

Nettie, give me a cup of tea for Lady Beaumont.

LAUDERDALE

She drank it all up.

HERMIONE

Make fresh.

LAUDERDALE

I say, what's grannie been saying to you about me, eh?

HERMIONE

Nothing.

LAUDERDALE

Some newer topic. (*Laughs foolishly.*)

HERMIONE

Put in more cream.

NETTIE (*handing the cup*)

Will that do?

LADY KATE (*coming up*)

Thanks. What a charming frock!

HERMIONE (*smiling faintly*)

You like it?

LADY KATE (*aside*)

That girl's deep. (*To Hermione.*) Will you show me the gardens, my dear, after I have had my tea?

HERMIONE

Yes.

DUCHESS (*on the pouffe, to Falconer*)

I find her enchanting.

FALCONER

Honored.

THE DUCHESS

Only a bit silent, shy——

FALCONER

That must pass. Aristotle says——

THE DUCHESS (*aside*)

These Americans drive one daft. All this nonsense, nothing settled yet, and I've got to run up to town tomorrow to Lena's *accouchement*. It's quite the last minute. (*To Falconer.*) I have been talking to her of my son's devotion.

FALCONER (*blandly*)

He has not made it apparent.

THE DUCHESS (*smothering a nervous laugh*)

Englishmen are so awkward. Their sentiments are all the hotter. He, too, is—er—timid.

FALCONER

I should not have thought so.

The Duchess and Falconer converse in low tones.

Herbert Forbes and Lyon Falconer enter in knickerbockers, mopping their foreheads.

FORBES—LYON (*together*)

We've done thirty miles.

LADY KATE

The roads here must be capital for the wheel.

LYON

Little sister, make us some tea; we are dying of thirst.

NETTIE

I must be going up-stairs. It is time for mamma to get back from the city. (*Exit. Lauderdale follows her. The Duchess and Falconer go out on the terrace.*)

LADY KATE (*to Hermione*)

I will meet you in the garden a little later. (*Exit.*)

FORBES

Was Miss Sharswood making tea for the Duke?

LYON

It seems quite a flirtation.

FORBES (*to Hermione*)

No cream, please. (*Takes the cup.*)

LYON

Has father spoken to you, Hermione?

HERMIONE

What about?

LYON

What I told you—Forbes knows.

HERMIONE

The Transvaal?

LYON

Yes.

HERMIONE

No.

FORBES

He is absolutely opposed.

LYON

He hasn't spoken a word to me since yesterday.

FORBES

He is offended.

HERMIONE (*quietly*)

Shall you give it up?

LYON

No.

HERMIONE (*with intensity*)

When one has the *beau rôle* one must keep it to the end.

FORBES (*leaning toward her with earnestness*)

It is sometimes difficult. I must go to my desk. No more tea, thanks. (*Leaves.*)

Hermione moves away and stands before a portrait on the left side of the room. Lyon lounges, sipping his tea.

LYON

You advise me to stand firm?

HERMIONE

Yes.

LYON

Would *she*, do you think?

HERMIONE

No, she was weak.

LYON

Poor mamma!

HERMIONE

She feared him.

LYON

Do you?

HERMIONE

Yes.

LYON

Yet you are not weak.

HERMIONE

Not in love or hate, but in action.

LYON

He has always done exactly as he liked. An orphan at twenty, with an immense fortune—

HERMIONE

Yes.

LYON (*standing with one hand on Hermione's shoulder*)

How sweet she was!

HERMIONE

And how she suffered!

LYON

Yes, a long time—fading. I remember that sadness of my childhood.

HERMIONE (*with passion*)

She will be avenged.

LYON

What do you mean?

HERMIONE

Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.

LYON

It works slowly, little sister.

HERMIONE

It works.

LYON

I haven't your faith.

V

The gardens. Lady Kate and Hermione walk, then sit on a bench.

LADY KATE

I don't like that girl.

HERMIONE

Nettie?

LADY KATE

The Sharswood girl.

HERMIONE (*smiling*)

The Duke does.

LADY KATE

Mere bluff. He likes you.

HERMIONE

Oh!

LADY KATE

Look here, my dear, you know it's a great catch.

HERMIONE

Whom for?

LADY KATE

Nobody would make faces.

HERMIONE (*laughing*)

I don't—er—make faces.

LADY KATE

It's expected of you to do something like that.

HERMIONE

Do you advise it?

LADY KATE

Of course he's a skunk.

HERMIONE

Do you advise the—er—skunk?

LADY KATE

It would delight the Duchess.

HERMIONE

And my father.

LADY KATE (*startled*)

Well, you *are* deep, you know.

HERMIONE

Deep?

LADY KATE

With all your quiet little airs.

HERMIONE

Did you marry for love?

LADY KATE

No.

HERMIONE

Why?

LADY KATE

I never did anything for love in my life.

HERMIONE

You!

LADY KATE

Papa lost his money soon after I grew up. His affairs were already shaky when I took Beaumont.

HERMIONE

He was, at least, handsome and clever.

LADY KATE

Yes, I got rather fond of him, poor dear.

HERMIONE

Why are people always doing things they don't like?

LADY KATE

Well, the thing one likes is one, the things one doesn't like are many. The choice is larger, do you see?

HERMIONE (*laughing*)

Yes. How amusing you are!

LADY KATE

Had your mother eyes like yours?

HERMIONE

Yes; did you never see her?

LADY KATE

Never. You and your brother resemble her, then?

HERMIONE

Yes.

LADY KATE

What did she die of, my dear?

HERMIONE (*uneasily*)

She was long ill.

LADY KATE

What ailed her?

HERMIONE

I don't know—I never knew; she just—got done to death.

LADY KATE (*startled*)

Why, what do you mean?

HERMIONE (*agitated*)

I can't talk of it, please.

LADY KATE (*kindly*)

My child, I beg your pardon.

HERMIONE

I was fifteen—old enough to feel the suffering of it.

LADY KATE

Of course.

HERMIONE

She pined for home.

LADY KATE

You mean America?

HERMIONE

Yes.

LADY KATE

Fancy!

HERMIONE

Ah, and I do, too.

LADY KATE

How odd!

HERMIONE

Don't you suppose I know we are only on sufferance here? Who cares for us? I am lonely.

LADY KATE

It must be a nuisance feeling that way.

HERMIONE

Did you always like it better here? Did you never want to go back?

LADY KATE

Oh, my dear, all places are a bore. I don't bother about such things.

HERMIONE

How can one help it?

LADY KATE

I have learned not to fuss.

HERMIONE

Teach me.

LADY KATE

You seem as calm as a lake.

HERMIONE

I am glad.

LADY KATE

I dare say you'll need calmness.

HERMIONE

Calmness isn't force.

LADY KATE

It's a form of it.

HERMIONE (*timidly*)

I have many worries. I have nobody to speak to. Mrs. Sharswood and Nettie are full of their own affairs. My mother's relatives have given us up. Papa is *brouillé* with all his own. I was fond of some of my cousins, but papa doesn't care to have us intimate with them any more.

LADY KATE

Why?

HERMIONE

He says they'll put foolish notions into us.

LADY KATE

In fact he thinks them of no further use.

HERMIONE (*bitterly*)

To him.

LADY KATE (*aside*)

She'll never get on.

HERMIONE

Just now I'm anxious about my brother.

LADY KATE

I hear he wants to go to the war.

HERMIONE

Yes, but my father won't let him.

LADY KATE (*aside*)

He has made an Englishman of him and now wants him to shirk his duty. What a drama!

HERMIONE

He'll go.

LADY KATE

Will your father forgive?

HERMIONE (*very low*)

It will be terrible. He is terrible.

LADY KATE

Dear me! And if you refuse Tot?

HERMIONE

And I shall.

LADY KATE

The fur'll fly. What a sweet thing you are!

HERMIONE (*shyly*)

And I like you.

LADY KATE

How would you feel if your father married? It's only in plays that the parents of girls of nineteen are eighty, that they are infirm and wheeled in Bath chairs. In reality they are young enough sometimes to want to get something out of life themselves.

HERMIONE (*smiling*)

I wouldn't mind you for a step-mother.

LADY KATE (*embarrassed*)

What an idea!

HERMIONE

But you'd be unhappy.

LADY KATE

I dare say.

HERMIONE

I can't tell you why.

LADY KATE (*laughing*)

You needn't. What a queer talk we are having, little one!

HERMIONE

Yes, and I so rarely talk.

LADY KATE

My dear, *au fond*, the British hate us all.

HERMIONE

And they are quite right. What are we here but parasites?

LADY KATE

If your papa heard you! Heavens! here comes someone! And I'm not fit to be seen. I'm going to escape! (*Picks up her skirts and hurries across the grass.*)

VI

Forbes. Hermione.

FORBES

All alone, Miss Falconer?

HERMIONE

Lady Beaumont was here. (*Rises.*)

FORBES

I had letters from home, and came out here to read them.

HERMIONE

Don't let me hinder you.

FORBES

Hinder me! You!

HERMIONE (*embarrassed*)

Well, read them to me, then. I love to hear about Canada.

FORBES

About Grand Pré and the Ardise Hills that our poet sings?

HERMIONE

Repeat those beautiful lines you were quoting the other day.

FORBES

Was it not I when thy mother bore thee,
In the sweet, solemn April night,
Took thee safe in my arms to fondle,
Filled thy dream with the old delight?

Told thee tales of more marvelous Summers

Of the far away and the long ago?
Made thee my own nurse-child forever
In the tender, dear, dark land of the snow?

HERMIONE

Oh, how exquisite!

FORBES (*very low*)

Have I not rocked thee, have I not lulled thee,

Crooned thee in forest and cradled in foam,

Then, with a smile from the hearthstone of childhood,

Bade thee farewell when thy heart bade thee roam?

HERMIONE (*trying to speak gaily*)

And in the Winter you lived at Montreal?

FORBES

In old St. Louis Square—the French aristocratic quarter. My mother was a Fenchelle.

HERMIONE

Her people were French?

FORBES

Yes, of the best. Were you ever in Montreal?

HERMIONE

Yes; once, when a little girl. Papa took us up to the boat races. They gave us a fête on the St. Lawrence. I have never forgotten it. When I remember America my soul is sick.

FORBES

But surely you run over often?

HERMIONE

No; papa doesn't wish it. He says it upsets me—makes me discontented here.

FORBES

Many of your compatriots prefer life in Europe.

HERMIONE

I never cared for society anywhere. But the country in America! Oh, the frosty nights, the icicles on the hemlock boughs of a morning!—the moon on the frozen rivers!—the sleighing across the meadows!—the blue of our brilliant skies, our dazzling sun! Then our long, hot Summers, how I love them! The dreamy noons under flapping sails, the early gallops through dewy woods, the

twilights on the lawn, the nights when one can go with bare arms and throat and sit by the sea and never feel chilled! Here one is always cold. It is always dark. These places are fine, but artificial. But I have learned to lie and say I like it here.

FORBES

There is art——

HERMIONE

Yes, there is art. I love nature best.

FORBES

I understand you.

A pause.

HERMIONE

Tell me, Mr. Forbes, why did you take this—er—position?

FORBES

I was whipped into it.

HERMIONE

Whipped?

FORBES

My father died in financial difficulties. There were debts. My mother could not bear it. Her heart was broken. She followed him in a few months. I went to New York to seek employment. I had intended to go into the army, but I could not then, for I had a burden. I was not trained to work. I wasted months in fruitless efforts to find it. I met your father accidentally at a friend's house. He offered me this place, with a large salary. With two or three years of economy it will put me on my feet, free to choose. I was not bred to business, and it was difficult to find what I was fit for. Your father wanted a man of education. I have that at least.

HERMIONE (*giving him her hand impulsively*)

I respect you.

FORBES (*stooping over it reverently*)

I am unworthy.

Falconer appears on the path.

FALCONER

Forbes, is that you?

FORBES (*starting*)

Do you want me, Mr. Falconer?

FALCONER (*drily*)

Yes. Here! Answer these for me. (*Thrusts some papers into Forbes's hands.*)

FORBES (*holding them with awkwardness*)

Have you directions to give me?

FALCONER

No. Decline all the invitations and pay all the bills, except Pritchard's, which is exorbitant. I will see to that later. (*Drops his eyeglass on the gravel. To Forbes, arrogantly.*) I have dropped my eyeglass.

A servant arrives and hands a letter on a tray to Hermione.

FORBES (*standing very upright, to servant*)

Your master has dropped his glasses.

SERVANT (*stooping*)

They're broken, sir.

FORBES

Pick up the pieces. (*Turns on his heel and goes into the house.*)

FALCONER

Ha, ha, ha! Feels his oats. Well, well! What a tatterdemalion it was when I picked it up in the New York gutters!

HERMIONE (*faintly*)

Whom do you mean?

FALCONER

Why, his excellency my private secretary.

HERMIONE (*icily*)

Do you need me any longer?

FALCONER (*angrily*)

Yes, I have to speak with you.

HERMIONE

I will sit down, then. (*Seats herself.*)

FALCONER

You are making an idiot of yourself!

HERMIONE

!

FALCONER

You are the mistress of my house. I have made you this. It is suitable you should take some lead, some initiative. You behave like a schoolgirl. Before the Duchess you seem completely ill at ease. It is absurd. Mend your ways. Remember who you are.

HERMIONE (*ironically*)

I am awed by her august presence

FALCONER

August fiddlesticks!

HERMIONE

What are we but commoners—

FALCONER

What expressions!

HERMIONE

—who bring up the tag end of every feast?

FALCONER

Fol-de-rol!

HERMIONE

All they want of us is our money and to snub us when they have it.

FALCONER

Your ideas are insensate and indecent. The Duchess has asked your hand for her grandson. Theirs is a great and powerful family. I have no desire to force your inclination, but it is worth thinking about. While you prattle about commoners these people are glad enough to be under our roof. They are all suavity and respect. What nonsense has Forbes been talking to you?

HERMIONE

Everyone's conversation cannot equal the Duke's for wisdom and wit. If I repeated our conversation, it would bore you. You must forgive duller intelligences.

FALCONER

I do not recognize my daughter!

What children have had a kinder father? My life has been one long sacrifice to them. I bore the opprobrium of renouncing my country to give them opportunities in a land where money isn't a crime and a brand. In America the rich man is vulgarly supposed to be a rapacious monster passing his life in dingy offices, bent on robbing the commonwealth of its rights, the widow and orphan of their pittance, the town of its taxes. He is held up to abhorrence and contempt, heaped with insult, caricatured in newspapers, his motives questioned, his honor impugned, his word distrusted. I for one was sick of it; but the step I took was for you, for Lyon and you. I wished to get you out of this atmosphere of malice and of hate, to breathe in air fit for deep lungs. I can make him a peer, a prime minister. I can make you the greatest lady in the kingdom, but like your mother you are vacillating—hysterical. . . .

HERMIONE (*very low*)

Let her children, at least, die a natural death.

FALCONER

What?

HERMIONE (*rising, with flaming eyes*)
You killed her!

FALCONER (*seizing her arm*)

How dare you!

HERMIONE (*freeing herself*)

Oh, it was not poison such as those ancients you are so fond of poring over administered. No; you let her have physicians—all in your pay, not hers. They recommended what suited you. They gave what you ordered. A word, a look of affection from her own people, would have saved her. You intercepted her letters. *I saw you!* She longed for a breath of home. She loathed the life you inflicted on her, the society of people who flatter you, prey on your purse and call you Jew and renegade behind your back. She was not clever like you and she was not ambitious, yet she guessed much

to which you are blind; but she was weak—weak—my poor, poor mamma, and—she—died! (*Sobs wildly.*)

FALCONER (*quiet but terrible*)

Go to your room!

Hermione rushes from him.

FALCONER

And this is one's recompense!

VII

Nettie Sharswood's bedroom. She is dressing for dinner, and sits in a peignoir doing her hair before a cheval glass. Mrs. Sharswood enters, dressed in traveling costume, followed by a servant carrying a portmanteau.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Here, James, put it down here.

SERVANT

Yes, madam. (*Exit.*)

MRS. SHARSWOOD

I'm back.

NETTIE

So I see.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Of course it was no use.

NETTIE

Of course.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

I saw Shaftsbury. Your brother won't get the living.

NETTIE

Naturally.

MRS. SHARSWOOD (*impatiently*)

Why?

NETTIE

He isn't fit for the place.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

What's that to do with it?

NETTIE

We must first *be*, then honors come.

MRS. SHARSWOOD (*sighs, takes off her bonnet; seats herself on a sofa*)

They don't actually gallop.

NETTIE

Sometimes.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

What's been going on here since I went away?

NETTIE

Lots of things.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Is Hermione engaged to the Duke?

NETTIE

They're all at it. (*While she speaks she tosses up her hair, powders her nose, rises and moves hither and thither in the room.*)

MRS. SHARSWOOD

What gown are you putting on?

NETTIE

My white; not many to select from.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Yes, and to see these parvenus walking over us!

NETTIE

They're keeping us alive just now, at least.

MRS. SHARSWOOD (*sighing*)

Is it worth while?

NETTIE

Oh, mamma, you always did wail!

MRS. SHARSWOOD

What makes you so cheery? What has put you in spirits?

NETTIE

I've got something to tell you.

MRS. SHARSWOOD (*wearily*)

I don't want any more hopes.

NETTIE

This isn't a hope; it's a fact.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Some of your facts have pretty nearly destroyed me.

NETTIE

Don't be nasty and I'll tell you.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Don't torture me; speak!

NETTIE

I'm not dressing for dinner, but for the Duke.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

What!

NETTIE

I've got a rendezvous with him late at night when they're all in their beds.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Nettie! Where?

NETTIE

Well—not here.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Down-stairs?

NETTIE

Yes, in the gallery.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

It's most imprudent.

NETTIE

Nothing'll happen.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Don't go far with him. Remember Lord Tweedle.

NETTIE

He's sillier than Tweedle and less brutal.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Do you mean to say——?

NETTIE

I think I can fetch him. (*Tosses her head.*)

MRS. SHARSWOOD

You *are* wonderful!

NETTIE

I am.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

How did you do it?

NETTIE

I was.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

That was never a success with me.

NETTIE

Ah, you were proud and sensitive.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

I used to be.

NETTIE

At the first rebuff you flopped.
(*Laughs cynically.*)

MRS. SHARSWOOD

And one mustn't flop, it seems.

NETTIE

Oh, no; stand the kicks—they pay.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Where one succeeds ninety fail.

NETTIE

Well, one doesn't hear of the ninety.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

No.

NETTIE

I'm the one.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Yet with Tweedle——

NETTIE

There I was one of the ninety. He was terribly intelligent.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

This time?

NETTIE

I've got him.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

You've your father's grit.

NETTIE

Didn't he kill himself?—shoot himself?

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Yes, like a gentleman.

NETTIE

After he was drummed out of the army?

MRS. SHARSWOOD

There was some fuss.

NETTIE

He was accused of cheating at cards, was he not?

MRS. SHARSWOOD

An accusation is—an accusation.

NETTIE

I understand.

MRS. SHARSWOOD (*weeping*)

He was a better man than those who ruined him.

NETTIE

Oh, I dare say, but if he'd had my brains he'd have seen it out.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Your character is stronger.

NETTIE

Shall I wear roses or violets?
(*Holds up some flowers.*)

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Roses become you.

NETTIE

What a goose Hermione is!

MRS. SHARSWOOD

I wish we had her money.

NETTIE

Money makes things easier—but what will she do with it?

MRS. SHARSWOOD

To let Lauderdale slip!

NETTIE

Yes.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Who else is here?

NETTIE

The Duchess—Lady Beaumont——

MRS. SHARSWOOD

She has designs on Mr. Falconer.

NETTIE

What kind?

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Why, she wants him, of course.

NETTIE

She'll fail.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Why?

NETTIE

Like you, she doesn't take the kicks; she's wishy-washy.

MRS. SHARSWOOD (*laughing*)

Lady Beaumont? Why, she's a meteor!

NETTIE

I'll squelch her light, then. Give me a chance.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

We have to make them ourselves—the chances.

NETTIE

You are right.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Yet, after all, it's destiny.

NETTIE

Mine is beckoning.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

God help you!

NETTIE

Oh, mamma, invoke the devil.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Child, you frighten me!

NETTIE

You'll feel less frightened when
I'm a duchess.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Well, I must run away and get on
my duds.

NETTIE

Above all, don't watch me.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

I'm trembling from head to foot.

NETTIE

Poor dear! (*Goes and kisses her.*)

MRS. SHARSWOOD

It seems so incredible!

NETTIE

For one thing, he wants to hit the
old cat.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

His grandmother?

NETTIE

Yes; he detests her.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

I wonder why.

NETTIE

An antipathy; not rare between
parents and children.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Oh, what a speech!

NETTIE

Look at Mr. Falconer and his off-
spring.

Dec. 1901

MRS. SHARSWOOD

He adores them—particularly Lyon.

NETTIE

Well, his affection is not reciprocated.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Is there trouble there, too?

NETTIE

Yes, Lyon wants to go and fight.

MRS. SHARSWOOD (*laughing*)

And his Yankee father isn't pa-
triotic!

NETTIE

Just that.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

He ruins his prestige if he keeps
him back.

NETTIE

Yes, the old chap's on a snag.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

He's as sly as a fox. He'll win.

NETTIE

Don't be too sure. They've been
his slaves. They were so young.
They are now man and woman, with
demands, desires, opinions, opposi-
tions of their own. Rebellion is slow
of growth, but once declared it rages.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Will they dare flout him?

NETTIE

I'll see Hermione does, by calling
off her lover. They'll say he jilted
her. There's a pill for Mr. Falconer
to swallow!

MRS. SHARSWOOD

You know it's rather noble of
Lauderdale to take you and give up
the millions.

NETTIE

Nonsense! An affront is never
noble. He's put an insult on them,
on his grandmother, to whom he had
given his word. Of course he doesn't
mean to marry me yet, but I'll man-
age it.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Is he so infatuated?

NETTIE

Crazy! Now go! (*Pushes her mother out, returns to the mirror, wrings her hands.*) My God! If now he should escape me!

VIII

Library after dinner. Falconer. Lyon.

FALCONER

You have my last word.

LYON

It is a harsh one.

FALCONER

Have I spent a life in reaching this to lose it all with a bullet sent into you by the hand of folly?

LYON

I regret my degree as much as you can.

FALCONER

You'll regret it more, later.

LYON

I could go back—after——

FALCONER

You never would.

LYON (*earnestly*)

Why are you so sure I shall get my death?

FALCONER

These things are hidden, but the risk cannot be run.

LYON

Better men are running it.

FALCONER

You are to perpetuate my name.

LYON

What does it amount to if it be tarnished by the shirking of duty?

FALCONER

This flurry of war will blow over—in a decade will be forgotten. Who'd care or know then if you went or not?

LYON

That is a base doctrine.

FALCONER

Lyon, do you so speak to your father?

LYON

I beg your pardon, but I am now a man. I cannot wear even your collar any longer.

FALCONER

To disobey me may have grave consequence.

LYON

Will you leave me until to-morrow to decide?

FALCONER

I will let you reflect, but my own decision is irrevocable.

LYON

Why did you make of me an Englishman? My tastes are English, my habits are English, my friends are English, my heart is English. I am not like Hermione, who is always an American.

FALCONER

Schoolgirl cackle! It's a pose of hers.

LYON

I have no home but this. I respect America, but if I am to be an Englishman, to perpetuate your name here, as you say, let me be baptized at the fountain head, let me give my blood, if I must; but let me have a birthright somewhere.

FALCONER (*gloomily*)

My son, you make it hard.

LYON

Oh, father, you were often kind—yes, kind. I——

FALCONER (*wearily, raising his hand*)

Go now, leave me. I am tired.

Lyon hesitates a moment, as if he would speak further, then turns and leaves the room.

FALCONER

Is he right, after all? What does it all mean? As he stood there before me I felt he was the shadow of my

lost youth. I have struggled and fought with beasts at Ephesus, yet behold to-morrow I die! Are these prizes we hanker after mere dust, after all? No! by God, I'll not yield! If my children are narrow, stupid, I must force them to brilliant destinies. My Lyon shall not be carrion for vultures to feed on. He must live, have children, build up what I began, make himself felt. Hermione, as Duchess of Lauderdale, can put this little island in her pocket. The Lauderales are powerful. With the dowry I can give her the world is theirs. The boy's insignificant, but Hermione is no fool, though she plays at being one. She can lead him. I must get rid of Forbes. His head is turned. I imagine he's spoony on Hermione. What presumption! I'd like to kick him, but to her I'll say nothing against him. Girls always fall in love with their fathers' private secretaries, particularly if they fancy them down-trodden. It is written. Ah, well, women always did prefer the soldier of fortune to the robber baron—find the detrimentials the fascinators. (*Laughs.*) And that must be the poor devils' consolation.

IX

Lady Kate Beaumont enters. She wears full evening toilette.

LADY KATE

Are you here? I thought you had gone to your apartments.

FALCONER (*smiling*)

How superb!

LADY KATE

You saw me at dinner.

FALCONER

You were far.

LADY KATE

I came to find fire; I am half-frozen.

FALCONER (*poking the fire*)

Here, sit down in my armchair. (*Pushes it toward her.*)

LADY KATE (*seating herself*)

What's the matter with Hermione?

FALCONER

She asked to stop in her room. Said she had a headache.

LADY KATE

She passed me on the stairs like a whirlwind when I came down just before dinner. She seemed upset.

FALCONER

Entre nous, she doesn't want to marry. She's an unusual girl.

LADY KATE

Ah, does she, too, disapprove of conventional ties? She told me she wished she had a stepmother. I thought that immense.

FALCONER (*laughing*)

When did she say that?

LADY KATE

After tea.

FALCONER

Kate, your shoulders are magnificent. Such beauty as yours is—genius!

LADY KATE

Thanks. I think so myself—at my age.

FALCONER

They were thinner at Nutwood.

LADY KATE

Twenty!

FALCONER (*draws a glove from his breast*)

Do you remember this?

LADY KATE

Of course. (*Aside.*) I'll be hanged if I do!

FALCONER

That day on horseback——

LADY KATE

Yes?

FALCONER

—when we stopped and I took you off in my arms, and——

LADY KATE

Nonsense!

FALCONER

I mean you jumped into them.

LADY KATE

Look here, Falconer, don't embroder.

FALCONER

We tied the horses and sat down on the moss, and I held this glove. *(Leans over and touches her pearls.)*

LADY KATE

Please don't bite me.

FALCONER

You're tempting.

LADY KATE

What do you think of my pearls?

FALCONER

They are not worthy of such a throat.

LADY KATE

I've got to sell them to scratch up my girl's dot.

FALCONER *(aside)*

The Earl told me it wasn't forthcoming.

LADY KATE

I'm so hard up, it's very difficult.

FALCONER

Let me advance it.

LADY KATE

I never pay.

FALCONER

Oh—in Paradise.

LADY KATE

I may not meet you there. How nice it must be just to put one's hand in one's pocket!

FALCONER

Put yours in mine, dearest.

LADY KATE *(drily)*

Is this a request that I should become your mistress?

FALCONER

An ugly word. Money crowns queens. It makes and unmakes empire, brings on wars and ends them

with a word. To a woman it is beauty, influence, delicacy, refinement, power. Without it she wilts and succumbs; with it she is sovereign of the universe, all women her enemies, all men her vassals. . . . Say one word, dearest.

LADY KATE

It can buy all these things?

FALCONER

All.

LADY KATE *(laughing)*

There is just one little thing it cannot buy—which is not for sale.

FALCONER

What?

LADY KATE

Kate.

Pause.

LADY KATE *(lightly)*

I am going back to the others. *(Exit.)*

FALCONER *(alone, lights a cigar, moves about, shrugs his shoulders)*

It's childish, but sublime. I'd marry her, but we are both too dominant.

X

All the dramatis personæ are present. Some playing cards, others at the piano. It is before luncheon. Hermione and Nettie in riding habits. The men in morning suits. In the foreground Lauderdale and Hermione.

LAUDERDALE

You don't seem to dote on me.

HERMIONE *(smiling faintly)*

Is that necessary?

LAUDERDALE

Other girls like me.

HERMIONE

!

LAUDERDALE

Nice ones, too.

HERMIONE *(ironically)*

They show taste.

LAUDERDALE

I say, don't chaff.

HERMIONE

I never do.

LAUDERDALE

You are rather frightening, you know.

HERMIONE (*smiling*)

Am I?

LAUDERDALE

But you're awfully pretty.

HERMIONE

I never heard it before.

LAUDERDALE

Our people seem to want us to like each other.

HERMIONE (*demurely*)

What for?

LAUDERDALE

Oh, you think to get a rise on me.

HERMIONE

Never.

LAUDERDALE

Why are you rough on me?

HERMIONE

Rough?

LAUDERDALE

Such darling little white hands couldn't be rough, could they? (*Tries to take Hermione's hand.*)HERMIONE (*haughtily*)

I am not sure.

LAUDERDALE

They'd box my ears?

HERMIONE (*laughing*)

Ha, ha, ha!

LAUDERDALE

I can't see what you're laughing at.

HERMIONE (*nervously*)

Ha, ha, ha!

LAUDERDALE

Look here, you know, that isn't polite.

HERMIONE

You are so funny!

LAUDERDALE

Funny?

HERMIONE

Yes—funny-looking.

LAUDERDALE (*drawing down his mouth*)

Thanks.

HERMIONE

But you are good-natured.

LAUDERDALE

Well, rather.

HERMIONE

Aren't you bored here?

LAUDERDALE

Beastly hole! I—er—beg pardon.

HERMIONE (*laughing*)

Oh, you needn't; I like frankness.

LAUDERDALE

You snub a fellow so! If it hadn't been——

HERMIONE (*archly*)

For Nettie?

LAUDERDALE

Nothing in that. I believe you're jealous.

HERMIONE (*laughing*)

Dying of jealousy!

LAUDERDALE

No cause, really, now. You're prettier.

HERMIONE

Oh, no.

LAUDERDALE

I'd be awfully kind to you.

HERMIONE

You're too amiable.

LAUDERDALE

If you'd marry me——

HERMIONE (*coldly*)I hear Lady Kate calling to me. Pardon. (*Leaves him. Joins Lady Kate at the piano.*)*Excitement at the door. Enter a Royal Gentleman, with an equerry. All rise and remain standing.*

FALCONER

An unexpected honor, your Royal Highness. (*Bows and leads him to the Duchess.*)

ROYAL GENTLEMAN

I am stopping overnight at the Tweedles'. I drove over to see my old friend. (*Kisses the Duchess's hand. The Duchess curtsies.*)

THE DUCHESS

Sit here, your Royal Highness.

FALCONER

Let me help you off with your coat.

ROYAL GENTLEMAN

Thanks, no, I am chilly.

FALCONER

I will ring for fire.

ROYAL GENTLEMAN (*to the Duchess*)

I wish he'd let us alone.

FALCONER

A glass of port?

ROYAL GENTLEMAN

No, thanks.

FALCONER

Your Royal Highness will stop and breakfast?

ROYAL GENTLEMAN (*impatiently*)

No, I cannot. I can stop only five minutes (*pointedly*) with the Duchess. Don't disturb the others. Ask them to sit down. (*All now resume their places and conversation.*)

THE DUCHESS

Let us go over there under the palm. (*They move across the room and whisper together.*)

FALCONER (*to the equerry, showing him the pictures*)

This is a portrait of Charles I. that I picked up at a sale.

EQUERRY

I am no connoisseur.

FALCONER

This is a Giorgioni. Through an exceptional opportunity I discovered

it in Venice. Of course it is disputed, but no other artist has his glow. This half-figure—I have made a study—

EQUERRY (*aside*)

I wonder how long they're going to stop here—this man's wound up.

THE DUCHESS (*calling Lady Kate*)

My dear!

Lady Kate joins her and the Royal Gentleman. They talk together under the palm. The others stare, speaking low.

Nettie and Mrs. Sharswood in a corner.

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Your hat's on crooked.

NETTIE

Have I mud on my nose?

MRS. SHARSWOOD

Yes, a little. (*Rubs her face with a handkerchief.*) Where did you get it?

NETTIE

I got splashed galloping to the village.

FALCONER (*to Hermione*)

Come and be presented.

HERMIONE

He hasn't asked it.

FALCONER

You're the lady of the house. (*Presenting her to the Royal Gentleman*) My daughter.

ROYAL GENTLEMAN (*smiling*)

I think I've seen you before.

HERMIONE

At the last Drawing Room.

ROYAL GENTLEMAN

We all admired you.

HERMIONE

I was frightened.

ROYAL GENTLEMAN

Oh, American girls are not *gauche*.

FALCONER

My girl is your subject.

ROYAL GENTLEMAN

Since when?

FALCONER

We are residents, not travelers.

HERMIONE

I am an American, your Royal Highness.

ROYAL GENTLEMAN

That's right, my dear Miss Falconer. Stand by the Stars and Stripes.

FALCONER

I have a boy who wants to fight for the Union Jack.

ROYAL GENTLEMAN (*coldly*)

Plenty of them.

FALCONER

I tell him——

ROYAL GENTLEMAN

I must get off. The Tweedles lunch at half-past one. I've got to lay a cornerstone at Leicester——

FALCONER (*confidentially*)

I sent word yesterday, your Royal Highness, to the War Office, offering twenty-five hospital tents, with a thorough fit-out of every modern convenience.

ROYAL GENTLEMAN (*coldly*)We think now it's the Boers who'll need assistance. (*Smiling.*) We—er—hope it.

FALCONER

I wrote them I would spare no expenditure.

ROYAL GENTLEMAN (*icily*)The War Department is not carried along on eleemosynary principles, but I dare say— Good-day, Falconer. (*Takes out a cigar.*)

FALCONER

Have you a light? (*Strikes a match.*)ROYAL GENTLEMAN (*dropping a glove*)My glove. (*Falconer stoops and picks it up.*)ROYAL GENTLEMAN (*carelessly*)

Thanks.

All rise, bow and curtsy. Exit Royal Gentleman. Falconer and equerry follow.

XI

Six months later. The Duchess's boudoir at Brentwood. Bric-à-brac, flowers, lights, tea table. Five o'clock P.M. The Duchess in rich black velvet tea gown. Lady Kate Beaumont in traveling costume.

LADY KATE

While Janet unpacks my boxes, do tell me all that happened after we left.

THE DUCHESS

What have you heard?

LADY KATE

Everything and nothing; the hodge-podge of gossip.

THE DUCHESS

It is quite too horrid!

LADY KATE

So I suppose.

THE DUCHESS

But one of my principles is to accept the inevitable.

LADY KATE (*laughing*)

It's a good idea.

THE DUCHESS

I have—accepted.

LADY KATE

I'm dying to hear the truth.

THE DUCHESS

When I discovered they had scampered off there was a nasty scene. Falconer packed Mrs. Sharswood out of the house, said he didn't keep a brothel—quite awful. I felt myself insulted. It was all the girl Hermione's fault. She led him on and then——

LADY KATE

Hermione's?

THE DUCHESS

Yes, then threw him over, and Tot is vain, like his mother.

LADY KATE (*laughing*)

And Nettie stood by to bind up his wounds.

THE DUCHESS

Fancy my feelings when we finally got on their track and my barrister wired the one word, "Married."

LADY KATE

Heavens!

THE DUCHESS

You may well say "heavens!" Then they went off to America.

LADY KATE

They trekked?

THE DUCHESS

What will you have? He's his own master. The son of his mother would naturally be a donkey.

LADY KATE

What shall you do?

THE DUCHESS

Swallow her.

LADY KATE

You are wonderful.

THE DUCHESS

She's a niece of Shaftsbury's.

LADY KATE

Cousin?

THE DUCHESS

Ah—er—yes, cousin.

LADY KATE

Handsome?

THE DUCHESS

A matter of taste.

LADY KATE

But how provoking!

THE DUCHESS

He'll have to face it.

LADY KATE

But you?

THE DUCHESS

My dear, I've been ill with it.

What is done is done! Let us drop the subject. My whole life has been spent in forgiving.

LADY KATE (*gently*)

I am sure it becomes you. You do it well.

Pause.

LADY KATE

And you know Lyon went off without a word?

THE DUCHESS

So I heard.

LADY KATE

His father's raging.

THE DUCHESS

What about?

LADY KATE

Disappointed.

THE DUCHESS

The youth is effeminate — something of a muff. The service will harden him.

LADY KATE

You do him injustice; he's a nice boy.

THE DUCHESS

His father had other ideas?

LADY KATE

He wanted him to go through at Oxford.

THE DUCHESS

Young Shaftsbury and Alex Hope and Tancred Montague have gone, better men, in his class.

LADY KATE

Yes, but they are British subjects, and their motto is not "*Jouir et mépriser*."

THE DUCHESS

Eh?

LADY KATE

Nothing. To make things complete Hermione should have run off with Forbes.

THE DUCHESS

Who is Forbes?

LADY KATE

Falconer's private secretary.

THE DUCHESS

I dare say she's capable of a low marriage.

LADY KATE (*laughing*)

Well, she hasn't yet, but I think she likes him.

THE DUCHESS

Why didn't you run off with Falconer? He seemed to be in love with you.

LADY KATE

Love?

THE DUCHESS

The gentlemen are fond of widows.

LADY KATE

Poor victims!

THE DUCHESS

Who?

LADY KATE

Widows.

THE DUCHESS

Of what?

LADY KATE

Of men's wiles and women's malice.

THE DUCHESS

Oh, my dear!

LADY KATE

Yes, girls envy them; married women fear them; men always try to see how much they'll do for how little. They are targets. I used to think men were afraid of my dignity; I now know they were afraid of my husband. (*Laughs.*)

THE DUCHESS (*reflectively*)

He was large.

LADY KATE

Yes.

THE DUCHESS

It should be easy for you to bring him to the point.

LADY KATE

I haven't a driving will.

THE DUCHESS

It's a nice place.

LADY KATE

Yes.

THE DUCHESS

He's called an agreeable man.

LADY KATE

Agreeable? (*Laughs.*)

THE DUCHESS

Well-mannered. . . .

LADY KATE

Ah!

THE DUCHESS

Not ill-looking.

LADY KATE

No.

THE DUCHESS

You've no money.

LADY KATE

No.

THE DUCHESS

And Sylvia's *dot*. . . . The Earl told me—

LADY KATE (*throwing up one hand*)

Don't!

THE DUCHESS

Really, dear, you ought to do it.

LADY KATE

Do what?

THE DUCHESS

Why, go for him.

LADY KATE

I can't.

THE DUCHESS

Why?

LADY KATE

I simply loathe him.

THE DUCHESS

One must shut one's eyes and jump.

LADY KATE

But I can't shut my eyes.

THE DUCHESS

It's only the first leap—

LADY KATE

I wasn't well brought up.

THE DUCHESS

No nerves. That's what's the matter with Americans.

LADY KATE

Mine got rattled.

THE DUCHESS

You must pick yourself up. The Prince arrives here to-morrow with the party he wanted.

LADY KATE

Well?

THE DUCHESS

I had reasons for wishing this affair hushed up—

LADY KATE

Of course, everyone says Tot jilted Hermione.

THE DUCHESS (*complacently*)

Well, so he did.

LADY KATE

H'm!

THE DUCHESS

I wanted it all hushed up, and so—

LADY KATE (*starting*)

You invited Falconer here?

THE DUCHESS

Yes.

LADY KATE

Whew!

THE DUCHESS

And he accepted, and here is H. R. H.'s answer.

LADY KATE

Answer?

THE DUCHESS

Yes, to the list of guests I sent him. I'm in an unpleasant box.

LADY KATE

Ah!

THE DUCHESS (*taking up a telegram, which she unfolds and reads aloud*)

He says: "Take off the last name"—Falconer's, my dear; "the man's a cad."



IN THE NIGHT

SOMETIMES at night, when moon and stars gleam cold
 Against the fleecy bosom of a cloud,
 I yearn for you—just for your hand to hold,
 To see your face, free from Fate's veiling shroud;
 And at my loneliness my heart takes fright—
 Sometimes at night.

All day there is the watchful world to face;
 The sound of tears and laughter fills the air;
 For memory there is but scanty space,
 Nor time for any transport of despair;
 But, love, the pulse beats slow, the lips turn white
 Sometimes at night.

Sometimes at night the silence saddens me;
 But stars gleam bright and whisper sweetest lies,
 The depth of dreamy darkness gladdens me—
 The kindly light seems from your melting eyes;
 With you I win my soul's divinest height
 Sometimes at night.

CONSTANCE FARMAR.

HAMMARIZERE

By Clinton Scollard

THERE'S a city called Hammarizere,
In a lovely land that I will not name;
Where all of the round of the ruling year
As a Summer mere the skies are clear,
And only the flowers of life take flame
From the great white sun in the dazzling dome;
And though dew ne'er gathers and rain ne'er falls,
There are waters that circle the shining walls,
And break into bubble and toss into foam
Round the city called Hammarizere.

There's a city called Hammarizere,
Where every gate is jeweled with jade
And opal, shimmering sphere on sphere;
And the mounting pinnacles, each a spear
Of welded marble, swim from a shade
So tenebrous that the nightingales
Sing all day long their love-despair,
Making amorous the emerald air
With the passionate burden of their tales,
In the city called Hammarizere.

There's a city called Hammarizere,
And they that dwell there never know
Aught of folly or aught of fear,
Aught that's desolate, aught that's drear,
And are never touched by the sting of woe.
Zither and lute and viol leave
The luring rapture of their spells;
And the lore of love into canticles
Forever the lips of the poets weave,
In the city called Hammarizere.

There's a city called Hammarizere;
I have woven it out of dreams, you say,
With the glow of its glamorous atmosphere,
And its roofs uptowering tier o'er tier
Into the heart of the azure day.
I have woven it out of dreams!—what then?
Forsooth, it is sometimes well to bide,
With care like a garment cast aside,
Away from the words and the wiles of men,
In the city called Hammarizere!

BALLADE OF THOSE PRESENT

TO the papers whose trade is supplying
 The news in a gossipy way,
 All the workaday world should be hieing,
 Its compliments grateful to pay.
 How kind to the public are they
 When they publish our names in their pleasant
 Descriptions of ball or soirée
 As "among the most prominent present!"

When we sit at the banquet board, trying
 To tickle our palates blasé,
 Comes a thought that is more gratifying
 Than all the Lucullan array;
 More sweet than the sherry's bouquet,
 Or the flavor of succulent pheasant—
 The thought of appearing next day
 As "among the most prominent present."

Since the common folk simply are dying
 To know what we do or we say,
 It were really a shame our denying
 To them all the pleasure we may.
 Then the news let the papers convey
 To the shopman, mechanic and peasant,
 Noting *us* at the dance or the play
 As "among the most prominent present."

ENVOY

St. Peter, receive us, we pray,
 When we've done with this world evanescent,
 Assigning us places for aye
 As "among the most prominent present."

THOMAS A. DALY.



THE man who believes he has all the friends he will need is getting ready
 to lose the ones he has.



LOVE is a bull in Philosophy's china shop.

THE SEVENTH DEVIL OF OUR LADY

By Edgar Saltus

WOMEN who neglected certain proprieties used to be stoned. For that matter, they are still. But more often than not the stones come from Tiffany's. Then, too, the proprieties are not what they were. Originally they must have been quite simple. To-day conceptions of them are tolerably mixed. They vary with the latitude and even with the architecture. In Mayfair and along Fifth Avenue observance of them appears to consist in having improper thoughts of other people. In the slums they are a compromise with the police. The Middle Classes are rumored to have lumped them into a fetish which they call Etiquette.

What that may mean we do not know and refuse to be informed. Erudition is not in our line. But summarily the proprieties may be taken as representing that which you expect from your neighbor. Yet, of course, not that which your neighbor is permitted to expect from you. Otherwise everybody would be of the same mind on the subject, and we should all know What's What.

The fact that we do not all know is sufficiently obvious and equally deplorable as well. But it has its excuse. The proprieties lack a criterion. There is no solvent by which an action can be resolved into right or wrong. Guizot tried to find one and failed. In the course of solemn platitudes spawned through interminable pages he stated with perfect philistinism that the obligations to avoid wrong and cleave to right were laws as much acknowledged by man in his proper nature as are the laws of logic. Yet though he had the gift of

producing phraseology as nauseous as that, for the life of him he could not devise a distinction. To give the gentleman his due, though, the difficulty that he omitted to remove he was tidy enough to conceal.

Aristotle was quite as circumspect. He stated that it does not depend on ourselves to be good or wicked. The information may be consoling but it is hardly helpful. Neither is the scholastic corollary that every being acts according to his essence. It is the same idea divested of its clarity. Nor are we aided by repetitions of the Goethean aria, "*Du bist am Ende was du bist.*" For there we get it again in German. On lines such as these the test is obscure. They promise but do not fulfil. Every silver lining has its cloud.

Here, though, is a break in it. Descartes, who, if we may believe all that we hear, taught of two substances, mind and matter, precisely as if he had seen and counted them, could, Madame de Staël has said, distinguish between right and wrong as readily as between blue and yellow. But is abuse evidence? Besides, women are sad gossips. Hell is paved with their tongues. Moreover, when the remark was made Descartes was too dead to defend himself against any accusation of omniscience.

Yet everything being possible, and assuming that the lady told the truth, in what did this power exist? Surely it was not Madame de Staël's intention to represent Descartes as being so wise that he knew, did he go home late and intoxicated, he would set a bad example to his baby sister, for common sense could have told him that.

Nor could she have meant that Descartes's ability to discriminate consisted in believing that whatever he said was right and whoever disagreed with him was wrong; for there is nothing unique in that; it is what we all do. *Oui, monsieur, vous aussi.*

Perhaps, then, what the lady meant—presupposing that she meant anything and also that she told the truth—was that Descartes knew What's What. If this supposition be correct we have only to inquire what is what, and at once the distinction between right and wrong becomes approachable and the mystery of the proprieties is dissolved.

Nothing could be easier. We have only to determine what attracts, what repels, and then coördinate their contradictories. What could be simpler? But here a loop is needful.

Clergymen to whom it has been our privilege to listen have, according to their fervor and grammar, denounced with more or less ability this vice and that, forgetful, or perhaps unaware, that the root of all evil is not original sin, but commonplace jealousy. Beside that seventh devil the others that were projected into the swine of the Gadarenes must have been beneficent sprites. Eliminate it from the scheme of things and war would lapse, greed as well, discord ditto and harmony reign. In lieu of the rivalries and strikes, divorces and dances, libels and races; instead of the failures and festivities and all the seductions, surprises and general surreptitiousness that we read about in the papers, there would be nothing to read about at all, and society, through sheer calm, would develop obesity of the mind.

However satisfactory that might be, jealousy is not to be eliminated. It is part and parcel of human nature. Regarded in the abstract it is the woof of every crime. Regarded in the concrete it is a tribute to our virtues. Specifically considered, it is the Seventh Devil of Our Lady.

In cataloguing it as such, studies and statistics have necessarily made us aware that a jealous woman can be

very tiresome to a man. But statistics and studies have made us equally aware that when she is not jealous it is of the man she is tired.

Jealousy is the barometer of a woman's heart. When its manifestations subside her temperature is falling. When it departs she is packing her boxes, she is preparing to follow. For it is the corollary of her love to doubt, to doubt always, to doubt in certainty, to doubt in conviction, to doubt with every possible evidence of constancy under her nose. The heart has logic that logic does not recognize. Then also, though constancy may be obvious, fidelity is not necessarily so clear. Constancy may demonstrate nothing more than lack of opportunity, but fidelity always demonstrates a lack of imagination. And of the vagaries of the imagination a lady may be, and indeed should be, more jealous than of anything else. Faces fade, but dreams abide.

There is, though, jealousy and jealousy. There is a jealousy that comes of a lack of confidence in another. There is a jealousy far more discreet and infinitely more delicate that comes of a lack of confidence in one's self. To the student of pathology either form is interesting, but on condition that the patient is in skirts. A male patient may, of course, be interesting also, but not more so than is any other dog in the manger. The story of Othello and Desdemona is a case in point.

There was a couple admirably mated. The one had no manners and the other no small talk. In spite of which, or perhaps precisely on that account, their adventures are quite endearing. According to Shakespeare, Othello, not content with being a blackamoor, made a fuss, raised the roof and smothered Desdemona with it. Shakespeare described the lady as entirely immaculate. Even had she been otherwise, the proceeding was, to say the least, in bad taste. A man of decent breeding never sees or hears anything that is not intended for him. Moreover, had any smothering seemed necessary, it was

himself he should have asphyxiated. Yet bad taste always leads to crime, and to such vulgar forms of it at that. Nowadays, of course, men do not murder their wives, at any rate in polite society. But some of them do worse. They institute uncivil proceedings. There are, though, others of finer sensibilities who collaborate with their dear departed in an effort to observe the amenities of life, while agreeing that individual tastes shall suffer no interference. *C'est d'un pur.*

Shakespeare to the contrary, we have reason to suspect that Othello was a man of just that high-mindedness. Shakespeare, it will be remembered, made the brute a Moor. Personally we do not know much about Moors, but for purposes dramatic we assume that anything, even to goodness, may, at a pinch, be expected of them. It now appears that Othello was not a Moor but a patrician. Indifference is a patrician trait. Of that, however, more by-and-bye. The point is the sudden discovery that Othello was less black than he was painted. *Les Maurès vont vite.*

The discovery came about in this fashion. Recently a palace situated in that quarter of Venice known as the San Maria Formosa was demolished. From the rafters documents fell. Collected and collated, it was found that they contained a chronicle of the final years of Venetian dominion over Candia. It was found, too, that in them Don Othello was mentioned as the last Governor of the island. It was found, also, that he was a man of rank. The documents, continuing, showed that after his marriage to Desdemona they proceeded to Candia; that later, the island being besieged by the Turks, Desdemona returned alone to Venice; that there she met another, a dearer one yet, a third, perhaps a fourth; that in each instance *sa forte fut sa faiblesse*; that ultimately, Candia having fallen also, Othello supervened; that undonesquely he beat her, subsequently concluded to die, and that for years thereafter the consolable Desdemona resided in that *casa* on the Grand

Canal which to-day every gondolier points out with an "*Ecco!*"

These facts, disencumbered for the purposes of the present paper from layers of detail, were not long since given to the world by the official who in Italy occupies the position of Minister of Instruction. Although they are too good to be true, we will assume that they are exact—all, indeed, except the undonesque greeting which Desdemona received, for that, if the other facts be accepted, seems highly problematic. Our reasons for so regarding it are brief.

The gossip about Desdemona originally appeared in a now forgotten novel. Cinthio, the author of it, was an early Bourget, an earlier Balzac. For literary purposes he went about here and there collecting scandals, which he set up in black and white. In default of linen from his neighbor sometimes he washed his own. In a pretty woman he saw not her eyes but a plot, and from her heart he proceeded to dig it. It was in the observance of this process that the story of Desdemona appeared. That the author was acquainted with her husband is presumable, but whether he collaborated with the young woman in any of her inconsequences we may surmise yet never know. According to his story, however, Othello was a brave young soldier of color, the glitter of whose exploits awoke Desdemona's love and won for him the command of the Candian troops. The two are married and embark for the post. With them go an ensign and a corporal. The ensign makes up to the lady. He is repulsed. The emotions she has inspired addle into rage. The ensign recites to Othello that his bride is an abandoned creature and that the corporal is assisting in her *abandon*. Othello bribes him to kill the corporal. The ensign slashes the poor devil in the leg. Then Othello takes a hand; he takes a sandbag, too, and pounds the lady with it until she gives up the ghost.

Barring the climax, which we assume to be literary, the rest of the story coincides tolerably well with the

documents recently found. But here is the objection. Cinthio's novel appeared in 1565. Shakespeare's rendition of it was produced in 1604. The capture of Candia occurred in 1669. As a consequence, if, as we assume, the facts produced by the Minister of Instruction are exact, Othello on his return from Candia could not have been less than one hundred and twenty-five, and Desdemona must have been at least a hundred and ten. At an age so mature one may fancy that all her wild oats had been sown, and, even otherwise, Othello must have been too feeble to beat her and too indifferent to care.

Indifference is a great aid to the maintenance of the proprieties. It is more conducive to harmony than anything we can cite. It is, as we have noted, a trait quite patrician. Obviously, then, however young or old the Othello recently discovered may have been, he would have patricianly neglected to see or hear anything that was not intended for him, and by the same token he would have omitted to raise the roof. In order to induce him to do so, both novelist and playwright were forced to twist him into a Moor, and as such capable of a jealousy that a patrician might feel but not exhibit. Jealousy is the basis of every affection, whether maternal, paternal, filial, sororal, conubial or even patrician. It is, therefore, a natural emotion. In the case of a woman it is not merely natural, it is occasionally attractive. But emotions that may be attractive in women are always repellent in men.

Here, then, at once, if our illustrations have been serviceable, we are back again in the contradictories from which we started. The deductions

that ensue follow almost of themselves. For it must be patent that whether or not Desdemona was lacking in certain circumspections, whether or not Othello was jealous; whether, indeed, as may have been and probably was the case, the lady herself was possessed of the seventh devil and through the process of its manifestations drove Othello first to drink and then to derision, in any event their reciprocal attitudes were not conducive to harmony.

Harmony is that which always has appealed and always will appeal to civilization. It is Nature's first law, the truest of her vocables. In the form of Beauty, which is its outward and visible sign, it has been an object of worship since worship began. Its exponents were singers and seers. It was Harmony that Hermes taught, it is Beauty that the Buddha preached. Civilization is in love with it and at odds with discord.

If, therefore, our deductions be worth a row of pins, it follows that the test of an action is its beauty or the lack of it, that according as it conduces to harmony or discord, according as it is capable of attracting or repelling, so is it moral or the reverse. In view of these premises it becomes permissible to transfer virtue from ethics to esthetics and to regard the proprieties as functions of art.

And why not? Life, as conducted to-day, is at its best either ridiculously vulgar or snobbishly absurd. Society, which used to sin and sparkle, now simply sins. There is modern progress for you, and a progress induced wholly by a misunderstanding of What's What, complicated by the presence of that seventh devil, from which all evil proceeds.



RATHER EXPECTED IT

THE DOCTOR—Your wife has water on the brain.

COLONEL BLOOD—Well, I'm not surprised. She's been trying to get me to swear off for the last three years.

EXTENSION SOULS

By Guy Somerville

I STOOD on the veranda of Mrs. Major's country house, on the Sound, and yawned dismally. It was five in the morning, and I was the first one down.

It had been a charming dance, but the rain had spoiled the out-of-door part of it, and the grounds had a rakish, unkempt, bohemian look in the early morning. The paths were wet still and sloppy, the rose bushes weighted down with more moisture than comes from a healthy dew, and the Chinese lanterns hung in ghastly shreds from their wires. Far down beside the bathing pavilion the Sound rose and tossed in a manner unbecoming still water, and the east, which should have been rosy, was chill and gray. The whole effect was that of the aftermath of a clambake.

A telegram lay ready for me on the clock. They have good telegraph service at Marchmont. I read it, and crumpled it listlessly in the pocket of my coat. Another old chum giving up his bachelorhood! I was becoming a landmark. But it was a good, safe land.

I stepped inside to search for Mr. Major's tin box of cigarettes. I had slept my two hours; I never can sleep more than that after a dance. Dancing is so restful; it is anæsthesia of the mind.

A feminine voice startled me.

I turned quickly. It was Lady Edith Archer, almost as early as I.

"Mr. Stapleton!" she said. "I'm so glad."

"So am I," I admitted. "There is no one here I would change with."

"I am glad it's you," said she,

"because I need somebody—some wise person—to confide in; and I haven't any brother, you know."

I sniffed suspiciously.

"It is a dangerous thing," I observed, "to give a young and beautiful woman the opportunity of being a sister to you."

Lady Edith opened her eyes.

"Why?" said she.

"Because," I replied, "in nine cases out of ten she will not avail herself of the opportunity."

"Don't flatter yourself," said she, scornfully.

"I'm quite sure I don't," said I, calmly.

"But you've always pretended to think I'm nice," said Lady Edith. "Haven't you?"

"I've always admired you, of course," said I. "But—not in that way, you know."

Lady Edith grew hot and discomposed.

"Not in *what* way?" she demanded, indignantly.

I lit a cigarette. She hates cigarettes.

"The way," said I, "that you meant."

"I didn't mean any way," she said.

"You must have had some way in mind," said I. "You gave yourself one."

"I gave myself *what*?"

"Away."

Silence.

Cigarette smoke.

"I'm very angry," said Lady Edith.

I threw the cigarette into the grate.

"Sit down on this," said I, "and let me dry the tears."

Lady Edith drew resolutely back,

"I will not have it," said she. "It is something I never did——"

"What?"

"—and never will——"

"Never?"

"—unless, of course——"

"They ought to be dried," I murmured, regretfully.

"Besides, it's too early," she said, with happy thought.

A light broke in on me.

"But it's getting later," said I.

"I'm not a girl," she said, haughtily, "to permit that sort of thing."

"To be sure not," said I, soothingly.

"Or to desire it," she continued, still more severe.

I lit a fresh cigarette.

"I wonder," I murmured, dreamily, "how a girl would act if she—desired it?"

Lady Edith was silent.

I proceeded.

"Would she *ask*——?"

"Of course not," said Lady Edith.

"Would she say 'yes,'" said I, insidiously, "when the man asked?"

"She would pretend that she did not want to," said Lady Edith.

I regarded critically the corner of the chimney piece. It was a flying Cupid.

"Would she probably say," I queried, "that she had never—well, that she was not, in fact, that sort of girl?"

She nodded.

"And how can the man——?"

"Only by trying," said she, absently.

I stopped looking at the flying Cupid.

"Quite so," said I.

"That's dreadfully naughty," said she, in subdued wise.

"I like it," said I.

"You must never, never again."

"Never—after this morning."

"Never—even this morning."

"It's too early?" I queried, mildly.

She sat up suddenly.

"Why haven't you ever married?" said she.

I reflected. Why hadn't I ever married?

"I suppose," I said, "because I have no vocation."

She toyed delicately with my fob.

"Would you do that to any girl?" she asked, irrelevantly.

"No," I said, virtuous.

Lady Edith was markedly relieved.

"What is it, then," she said, "that you like in me?"

I perceived that I must pick my steps.

"Is it my beauty?"

"Nay."

"My sweetness?"

"Nay, nay."

"Tell me."

"It is because you have an extension soul," I answered, gravely.

She looked furtively at her boots.

"Not there," said I.

"Oh! I see," said she.

"That is the point," said I. "You always do. That's why I like you."

"A girl with an extension soul," said she, "need not be sound in wind and limb, but——"

"She must understand without hitching," I added.

"I think I could do that," said Lady Edith, "if by 'hitching' you mean stopping to explain."

"Then why," I asked, vaguely, "should there have been any hitch?"

"It was only momentary," she pleaded.

"True," I mused. "And things rarely go smoothly the first time."

"They would go still less smoothly," said she, "another time."

I took a turn or two up and down the room.

"Don't tempt me," said I.

"Why did you say," said she, thoughtfully, "that you had never married?"

"It isn't," I said, easily, "because I do not know how girls are won."

"Some girls aren't won," said Lady Edith.

"Some girls aren't one, two, three," I rejoined.

"Not to be married," said she, "is to be selfish."

"Prudent," said I.

"And conceited."

"Merely a proper pride," I ventured.

"If a man really desired to," said she, "I wonder how he would begin."

"First he would kiss her," I suggested, promptly.

"But how could she know whether he——?"

"Only by trying," said I.

Lady Edith sparkled as to her eyes. It has not been mentioned that she was pretty.

"After that——?" she said.

"One thing at a time," said I, imperturbably.

"We have now come," said she, "to the second thing."

"No," said I. "The first time was a foul."

"Well," said she, "now we *have* come to the second thing."

"The second thing," said I, "is the same."

"Mr. Stapleton," said Lady Edith, "will you go back up-stairs, or shall I?"

"I am going to go on," said I. "I meant to—really—from the first. Be nice."

Lady Edith sat down.

"This morning at five," I said, quietly, "I made up my mind that I would ask you to marry me before breakfast."

"I couldn't," said she. "I'm too hungry."

"I don't mean that," I said.

"That's what I thought," said Lady Edith.

"But I *do* mean to ask you if you will marry me."

Lady Edith stopped swinging her foot.

"Even," I went on, slowly, "if I have to wait till—after dinner."

"Are you serious?" said she, softly.

"I ought to be," I said, pathetically. "If you knew how I valued my bachelorhood you would know how much it costs me to give it up."

"Perhaps you needn't give it up," said she, playing with the cushions.

I sat down beside her

"Let's stop trifling, Edith," said I,

gently. "It means a good deal to me."

"I always told the girls I could make you propose," said she. "They said I couldn't."

"You win," said I, hopefully.

"Of course you are sure of your answer?" she said, drawing it out.

"Fairly sure," said I, with some confidence. "If I hadn't been I wouldn't have asked you."

She smiled quite witchlike.

"Well, the answer is no, Mr. Stapleton."

"But I mean it seriously," I protested.

Lady Edith laughed.

"I'm so glad," said she. "I'd be sorry for anyone else."

"So should I," I admitted, incautiously.

She smoothed my hair with a gesture quasi-maternal.

"It will do you lots of good," she whispered. "And I won't tell. Except, of course, May and Belle—and mamma."

I walked to the front door and threw it open.

"You're going to tell May?" I asked.

"Were you thinking of asking her later?" she queried, unreasonably.

"I—I don't know," I faltered. "I'm a little upset."

"At any rate, there is no objection to my telling mamma?"

"Not of that character," I admitted, gravely.

Her hand stole into mine.

"Isn't it fun?" she whispered.

"They said you were never really interested in girls. They said you had sworn never to marry. They said you belonged to some club down in the city where everybody has to agree that before he marries he will eat a Panama hat with a bright-red band, with all the others looking on, and if he chokes, or—or anything, he can't marry that time. They said——"

"I'd rather not hear any more," I interrupted, feebly. "It isn't right. It wasn't intended I should."

There was a pause. The east

wind, fresh from the Sound, blew in our faces.

I turned suddenly.

"Did you refuse me," said I, "on my merits?"

She laughed.

"If I had," she said, tantalizing, "I should hardly have had sufficient grounds."

"I think," said I, "that it must have been because I asked you so early."

"That will please Belle," said she. "It was rather because you asked me so late."

"How so?" I queried.

"I'm engaged to Jack Miller," she said, simply.

I looked up with affected stupidity.

"Of course," said I, as if to myself. "How absurd of me to have forgotten."

"To have what?" demanded Lady Edith.

"Forgotten," I repeated, calmly, studying the bedraggled lantern nearest the steps.

"I didn't write accepting him till yesterday morning," she said, with some sarcasm.

"And he didn't wire me till last night," I rejoined, as I handed her the open telegram. "Which is what makes it all the more remarkable—"

Lady Edith drew herself up.

"Your conduct this morning—" she began.

"No, it wasn't," I pleaded, piteously.

"Suppose—oh, *suppose*——"

"You couldn't," I interjected, with haste. "Don't you see? I *knew* you couldn't."

"I will tell Jack," she said, with icy finality.

"Let's," I agreed.

She flushed.

"No," she said. "I was wrong. I will fight my own battles. Jack, poor boy, has enough to worry him."

"That's true," I admitted, sympathetically. Which made it worse.

"Why did you do it—*why*?" she said.

"I am really fond of you," said I.

"It was nice to propose to you. On my word."

"I'm glad you enjoyed it," said she.

"And absolutely safe," I added, cautiously.

She came a step nearer.

"Suppose," she said—and my blood ran cold at her earnestness—"suppose there had been an error in the telegram?"

"I'd have married you," I answered, promptly.

She fell back.

"And sued the telegraph company," I added, thoughtfully.

She gave a little laugh.

"I don't care," said Lady Edith.

But she did. She would have liked to tell May and Belle—and mamma.



CONNUBIAL ADVICE

THE WIFE—I don't believe half I hear.

THE HUSBAND—You shouldn't talk so much, my dear.



FORESIGHT, BUT NO HINDSIGHT

GERALDINE—Speak to pa and I'm sure you'll have no kick coming.

GERALD—No, the kick will probably be when I am going.

THE LOSER

By Theodosia Garrison

I HAVE gambled away my life—
Small ventures on that and this,
A bit of youth for a useless truth,
A trifle of heart for a kiss.

For with pitiful stakes and small
In a crafty game played I;
With counters spanned in a careful hand
When the losses were overhigh.

I have gambled away my life—
A little now and again;
Oh, bit by bit have I wasted it
In the fashion of weakling men.

I have stayed in a coward's game
With a sickening fear of loss;
Afraid to play for the joy that lay
In the fall of the reckless toss.

I have gambled away my life
In a puny, cautious game,
But now, alack, were my treasure back
I would never play it the same.

I would stake my all on the throw—
Mind, soul—yea, all that is I—
And in fierce content and merriment
Would bide the cast of the die.

To live or to die like a man,
Heart glad of the chance he had,
Who shook with Fate for his table mate
In a glorious bout and mad.

In a moment to end it so—
Die beggar or live a king—
And pay the score, be it less or more,
In the hour of the reckoning.

And to die, if to die I must,
With a heart unswerved, and then
With face to the sod give thanks to God
That I played like a man with men.

BITTER MEMORIES

THE reminiscent rhymester sings
 Full oft of childhood days,
 That ever flit on brilliant wings
 By most nectarious ways.
 Sweets *pur et simple* fill his rhyme,
 No bitter may steal in,
 And it is very clear that I'm
 Not of the singer's kin.
 For when I go down Memory's street
 At every turn I see
 Quinine—that must be taken “neat”—
 And boneset-tea.

And, though it sounds a paradox,
 More bitter things than these
 I find in the Pandoran box
 Of childhood memories.
 Not aloes—which I learned to *like*
 What time I bit my nails,
 Nor rhubarb—I was *such* a tike
 For mixing of my ails!
 But these, these are the bitterest—
 Molasses thick and black
 With sulphur subtly coalesced,
 And ipecac!

EDWARD W. BARNARD.



ONE HOPE OF ESCAPE

SERVANT—Mr. Brown, the florist, is at the door with his bill.
 BROWN—Keep him waiting a minute and I'll put my money in my wife's name.



INDISCREET

WHEN he asked her last name
 She was justly offended;
 From Chicago she came
 When he asked her last name—
 It was really a shame
 That their friendship thus ended;
 When he asked her *last* name
 She was justly offended.

FREDERICK BLAIR WRIGHT.

AN OPAL RING

By Justus Miles Forman

JIMMY ROGERS went into Raudnitz's to get a punch bowl for a man who was going to be married, and ran on Livingstone hanging over a plush-lined tray full of jeweled rings of price.

"Those aren't for men. They're ladies' rings," said Jimmy, pointedly.

"Really?" asked Livingstone, with some concern. He chose a curiously fiery opal in a marquise setting with small diamonds, and held it up to the light. "Still, you know," he observed, squinting at the opal, "I wasn't thinking of presenting it to you or even of wearing it myself."

"You've gone and got yourself engaged again!" cried Jimmy, in unconcealed horror.

"I haven't," said Livingstone, indignantly. "I haven't done any such fool thing! Who would I be engaged to here, anyhow?"

"Might be any one of half a dozen," growled the unsatisfied Rogers. "Anywhere from Lulu de Vignot—and you'd get a good *dot* there, too—to Molly Hartwell. If you aren't engaged, you ought to be. Your conduct is scandalous."

"Well, I'm not engaged," insisted Mr. Livingstone. "I'd really like to know," he complained, bitterly, "if there is any police regulation in Paris that prevents an unmarried, unattached and harmless young man from buying opal rings. Maybe I shall be engaged some time, and then the ring will come in very nicely—like the 'Jones' doorplate."

"But what the deuce do you want the ring for?" demanded his exasperated friend. "Think of the fun you

could have—we could have on the price of that ring!"

Livingstone smilingly paid for the jewel, dropped the little box in his pocket, and led the way out to the Boulevard.

"We have a great deal more fun, anyhow, than is good for us," he said, virtuously. "You know that as well as I do. The ring—well, I bought it because it was pretty, and because I didn't have anything better to do. If ever I'm strapped I can pawn it for a good price; I shouldn't miss it, you know. It wouldn't be like pawning your watch or your scarf pins."

They crossed the crowded Place de l'Opéra by a series of desperate dashes, and sat down under the awning of the Café de la Paix.

"Turin bitter," ordered Livingstone. Jimmy Rogers took a vermouth *sec*.

"I will make you," said Livingstone, slowly, "a sporting proposition. You are still suspicious about that ring. You think I bought it to give to a girl. Now, I will allow you five minutes to select some one woman from those passing this café. I stipulate only that she shall be unmarried—you can generally tell by the look—and passably handsome. More beautiful women pass this corner every day than any other corner in the world—as you know. I will wager you a pink-and-blue thousand-franc note that I personally present my opal ring to that woman within a week, and that she will, of her own accord, continue to wear said ring. Do I make myself clear?"

Jimmy Rogers stared. "You do," he said, feelingly. "You also make

it clear that you will retire before long to Charenton up the river. The State maintains an institution of peace and seclusion out there for just such as you."

"I assure you I am quite serious," protested Livingstone.

Jimmy Rogers stared again. Then after a little he laughed.

"I'll take that wager," he said. "No one on God's green earth but you would have made it, but I'm past being surprised at anything you do. Moreover, I shall be glad of the thousand francs. Hervieu has a *bouledogue* that I want. Of course it will all end by my bailing you out of Mazas, but if that sort of thing amuses you I don't mind. Now for the woman."

He looked out into the crowded Boulevard where the double line of vehicles was crawling by, with frequent halts, and all at once seemed vastly amused.

"Let's get out on the curb," he suggested. "The carriage crowd will be better looking than this lot." So they stood together beside the little newspaper kiosk and looked into the passing landaus and *fiacres*. Just at the moment the procession was at a standstill.

"How will that one do?" asked Jimmy, pointing.

An ordinary public *fiacre* stood almost in front of them, and on its seat were a rather stout, fierce-looking gentleman of middle age, who wore his frock coat with that unmistakable air of one used to a military uniform, and a singularly handsome young woman who might have been anywhere from twenty to twenty-five. She had a great deal of very black hair piled up on her head in a multiplicity of braids, after the Russian fashion. She had enormous dark eyes, just the sort to go with such hair, and her skin was extremely pale, almost colorless. She sat in *voiture* No. 11,317 as if it were a crimson-and-gold coach of state.

Livingstone drew a long breath.

"Yes, she'll do," he said, softly. "My Lord! she'll do."

Jimmy Rogers appeared to be struggling with some emotion.

"But look here," continued Livingstone, "maybe she's married. Maybe that chap is her husband. I'm no destroyer of domestic bliss, you know." His eyes were still on the woman in the *fiacre*. "She's a queen!" he declared.

"What!" cried Jimmy Rogers, sharply. "Oh, no, I believe she's not married," he went on; "I think I know who she is. Of course I'll not tell you her name. That's part of your trick."

The line of carriages moved slowly on.

"I shall have to part with you, much as it pains me," grieved Mr. Livingstone, following with his eyes *voiture* No. 11,317. "I must find where the future owner of my opal lives."

"Oh, never mind that," said Jimmy; "I can give you her address. You've a whole week yet. Let's be getting back across the river."

They caught a Place St. Michel omnibus and climbed to the *impériale*, where Livingstone sat in unwonted silence and Jimmy Rogers fought bravely with his feelings. They descended at the Place St. Michel because the omnibus went no further, and walked up the Boulevard to the Source.

"I'll leave you here," said Jimmy, "because I'm dining on the other side and I've got to dress. Don't be in too much of a hurry with your ring. Maybe she doesn't like opals."

Livingstone stood on the curbstone, still lost in meditation, and Jimmy Rogers laughed all the way home.

A newspaper vendor, tottering under gray hairs and a huge pile of his stock in trade, came by at a trot, and Livingstone bought a *Soir* and settled down at a table under the awning of the Café Source. *Le Soir* contained even less news than usual. Livingstone ran over the *nouvelles étrangères* with disgusted impatience. Two United States military men were squabbling over tinned beef; the three-weeks' president of a

South American republic had been assassinated, and there were fresh riots in Bosnia and Campania, in which three visiting French officers had been killed, it was believed at the instigation of the Queen of Campania. The Queen was furthermore reported to have fled the country temporarily.

"She'd best not come here," said Livingstone, absently; "she wouldn't be thankfully received. Why the deuce doesn't Russia take those fool little Balkan states over her knee and spank them one by one? They're putting on altogether too much side lately."

He swallowed the last of his *apéritif*, and gathered up his gloves and stick with a yawn.

"Oh, well," said he, "I'm not interested in Balkan states—I'm interested in the loveliest woman I ever saw. I wonder . . . Oh, what nonsense! Only to-morrow I'll make Jimmy tell me who she is. Of course he knows—and then we'll see about that thousand franc note. Now, if I'm to dine in the Avenue Hoche at seven o'clock, I'd best be dressing."

He waved his stick at a passing *fiacre*, gave the *cocher* the address of his studio and sank back on the cushions thinking of the young woman with the black hair and the big dark eyes.

They went on from dinner that evening to the Opéra, where "Sanson et Dalila" was to be sung, and the gods were very good to Mr. Livingstone, for he had hardly settled himself in his orchestra stall between the certain American girl and her mother with whom he had been dining, when *she* came into the row next before them. She was with the same middle-aged man of military bearing. She was all in white, with no ornaments, no jewels at all, and her great mass of black hair was dressed low on the neck after the English fashion—but with a difference.

Her seat was immediately in front of Mr. Livingstone, and as she

gathered up her skirt to sit down she turned half about and looked backward carelessly over the house. Her eyes caught Livingstone's, and a little flush of color spread up over her cheeks. Livingstone was half out of his chair and his face was scarlet. There was a most absurd pounding inside him somewhere.

"Oh," cried the girl by his side, softly, "what a beauty! What an impossible beauty! Did you ever in your life see anything so lovely?"

"No," said Livingstone, not moving his eyes, "no, I never did. No one ever did. Yes, when I was very small, queens in fairy stories were like that." And inwardly, "Ah, I knew you had such shoulders and a little round white throat like that! And I knew you'd hold your head so, too, and that the curve of your cheek and chin would be just as perfect as it is! Why didn't I make that beast of a Jimmy tell me who you are, you—you fairy-book queen?"

Out in the foyer between acts he managed to keep her always in sight, to watch how she walked, to see her smile, to hear her low voice now and then when she spoke to the middle-aged man of military bearing.

When the opera was over he bore out to the carriage an air of tragic gloom that evoked smiles from the American girl.

Jimmy Rogers, wakened violently in the middle of the night by an incoherent object in Inverness and opera hat, suffered cajolings, the offer of bribes beyond the dreams of avarice, and finally bodily assault, but only laughed with his face in the pillows, laughed himself faint.

The next day Livingstone sat five hours in front of the Café de la Paix and went home in the evening threatening Jimmy Rogers with all the awful things that a retentive memory and a naturally remarkable imagination could call up.

But a day later he saw her again. She was seated beside an elderly woman in a *fiacre* and was driving rapidly up the Champs Élysées from

the Place de la Concorde. There was not an empty *voiture* in sight, and Livingstone could only stare up the avenue after the retreating carriage and go over in his mind all the things he had the day before remarked concerning Jimmy Rogers.

The next day, however, the gods were kind again. He had gone over in the afternoon to the Gare St. Lazare to see some friends off for Dieppe, gone willingly enough, for they were a pair of ancient tabbies who had a sort of family claim on him and had bored him beyond speech during their stay.

He had stowed them away in their first-class compartment, lied to them about how cut up he was to have them go, and after watching the train pull out of the station had turned back toward the waiting-room and the street with a sigh of genuine relief.

Then all at once he caught his breath very sharply and changed his mind about going back to the waiting-room. The train for Brussels was standing ready for departure on the opposite side of the narrow *quai* or platform from which the Dieppe train had just pulled out, and the last belated passengers were tearing madly up and down, hunting for vacant places and hurling an avalanche of hand baggage into already packed compartments.

A group of four people stood at the open door of a first-class compartment talking very earnestly. There were two men in traveling clothes—one the middle-aged man of military bearing, late of *voiture* No. 11,317 and of the Opéra, the other a younger man, also of military bearing. He said little and appeared to be a sort of aide to the elder man. The other two members of the group were the elderly lady of the *fiacre* and—the fairy-book queen.

Livingstone slipped behind the open door of a neighboring compartment. He had no mind for eavesdropping or listening. He wished merely to watch her face, but he found, rather to his disgust, that his position made it impossible for him

to avoid hearing every word that was spoken.

"I don't like this going off and leaving you," said the middle-aged man, frowning down on her. "If there were any possibility of avoiding it——"

"Oh, nonsense!" cried the girl. Livingstone was certain now that she was a girl. She could not be over twenty, he thought. They spoke in French, the gentleman with rather a curious accent, not Germanic but something akin to it, the girl almost flawlessly. "And besides," she went on, "you'll be back to-morrow. It isn't as if——"

"Still, I don't like it, for all that!" insisted the elderly gentleman. "There'll be no one with you but Sophia and the servants. For heaven's sake, be careful! Stop closely in the house; take no risks."

The girl laughed.

"Anyone might think," she cried, "that I'd my name on a card about my neck, that all Paris was waiting to shoot me, or something. Nonsense, my dear! I'll be very, very discreet."

"It'll be the first time you ever were," growled the gentleman. "Come, the train is starting! Get in, von Strofzin!" He bent over and kissed the girl on both cheeks—Livingstone could have slain him just then—and clambered into the compartment. The younger man saluted very impressively, heels together, and followed. The guards ran along the *quai* slamming doors and crying: "*En voiture, en voiture, messieurs et dames!*" and the train pulled slowly out of the Gare St. Lazare.

Livingstone, safely concealed in the throng, followed the two women out through the waiting-room to the courtyard, where cabs stood in line and *cochers* shrieked for patronage. The two halted an instant, looking out over the crowd, and the elder woman pressed her hands to her head.

"You poor old dear!" cried the girl, "is your head so very, very bad? Because I—I wanted to sit down out there on the *Terminus terrasse* and

watch the people; you—you aren't up to it, are you?" she suggested, wistfully. Then after a moment she began to laugh. "Sophia, you're going straight, straight home," she said, soothingly, "and get into bed with a bottle of salts. *Moi*, I'm going to stop here and see the people. I'll come on later."

The elderly woman appeared to be suffering from heart failure.

"You—you—stop here, alone, *you?*" she sputtered, feebly; "you're mad, child, mad! It's impossible! What in heaven's name would the Duke say?"

"Now who the deuce is the Duke?" growled Livingstone.

"Don't be an idiot, Sophia!" said the girl, rudely. "It's absolutely safe, and you know it. Those American women do it every day. No one knows me here. Don't be silly!" and she signaled a *fiacre*, into which the elderly lady, cackling feebly, allowed herself to be stowed and driven away. Then the girl laughed again with a little note of exultation in her voice, and picked her way across the Square, with Mr. Livingstone at her heels, to the *terrasse* of the Hôtel Terminus.

As she was taking her seat at one of the little iron tables a Frenchman who sat near by, the ordinary type of *marcheur*, leaned forward and with nationally characteristic bad judgment bestowed upon her a languishing smile and an invitation to his hospitality. The girl shrank back with a little cry of alarm, but Mr. Livingstone pushed between the two and bent over the Frenchman, resting his two hands on the small table. "*Vous m'avez adressé?*" he inquired, politely. The *marcheur* turned the color of the absinthe in his long glass and made choked sounds, presumably of apology.

Livingstone turned about to the girl.

"Will you let me take you away from here?" he asked. "You—you might be annoyed again—people are beginning to stare."

The girl's face was very flushed and she was breathing quickly, but

she looked into Mr. Livingstone's eyes for a moment and rose quite meekly.

"Oh, thank you," she said. "You—you are most good. If you would just put me into a *fiacre* and send me home. I—I shouldn't have come here."

"Well, you're not going home alone," said Mr. Livingstone, boldly, as he settled himself on the cushions of the *fiacre* beside her; "you're going to be taken care of properly. Why should you go home, anyhow? Sophia will be all right without you."

The girl flashed him a sudden alarmed glance. Then her mouth began to quiver, and she laughed.

"*Pauvre Sophia!*" said she.

"*Pauvre Sophia!*" agreed Mr. Livingstone, with emotion.

"You listened! you were on the platform of the *gare!*" accused the girl.

"I was," said Livingstone, "and if you're trying to make me feel bad about it, you might as well give it up. I was also," he added, "in front of the Café de la Paix three days ago and at the Opéra the same evening, and I was in the Place de la Concorde yesterday."

"I—I saw you," admitted the girl, "in front of the Café de la Paix and—and at the Opéra."

"Look here!" said Livingstone, suddenly, "you wanted to sit and watch the people go by, there at the Terminus; will you—will you come with me across the river, where the people are worth watching?—over on the Boul' Miche' somewhere? You—you can't do this sort of thing alone, you know, and I'll—well, I'll see that you aren't annoyed."

"That," said the girl, slowly, "would—would be very, very wrong, wouldn't it?"

Livingstone looked his despair.

"But," she added, "it would be fun."

"It would," he agreed, enthusiastically, "no end of fun; let's go," and he leaned forward and told the *cocher* to drive to the Café Source on the Boulevard St. Michel.

They drove across the Pont de la Concorde and over the long stretch of the Boulevard St. Germain, and turned the corner into the gayest and naughtiest street in the world.

The *terrasse* of the Café Source was not more than half-full, for it was hardly yet the "green hour." They chose a little round table near the front, and Livingstone ordered vermouth *sec*. The girl chose grenadine, whereat Livingstone shuddered in pained sympathy.

The fairy-book queen bore a certain flush as to the cheeks and an excited sparkle in her great eyes. She laughed for no apparent cause.

"Don't mind me," she begged, after a little, "I'd laugh at anything today. Don't you see I'm out on a lark? Do you ever go on a lark, monsieur? This is the first time for—oh, years, that I have not had to sit up straight and mind what I was saying. I feel like a child!" She beamed delightedly on Mr. Livingstone and he beamed in return. Her face under its great mass of black hair was the most maddeningly beautiful face he had ever seen. Her mouth was the mouth he had dreamed of since childhood, and her little pointed chin, that was out-thrown when she laughed, how deliciously perfect it was!

"Are you an Englishman?" she demanded. "You certainly aren't French or German."

"American," said he, smiling, "though I live pretty much everywhere."

"Then why don't you say 'Amurrican'?" she protested. "I don't believe you're a good American at all. Your clothes are English, certainly, and you don't talk through your nose. See how observing I am!"

"And you?" he asked.

The girl shrugged her shoulders.

"Oh, I'm a bit of everything," she said.

Livingstone watched her curiously over his glass. He could not make her out. The situation, of course, pointed unmistakably to a very easy solution of his mystery, but he found himself rejecting this solution with-

out consideration. She wasn't that sort.

The dark eyes smiled at him.

"Shall I tell you what you're thinking?" asked the girl. "No, I won't, either. It's too obvious. I'll tell you just this much. I'm here in Paris with my uncle. We live very far away to the southeast. My uncle had to go to Brussels this evening on affairs of importance, so I set out for a lark. I could do it easily, you know, for we're traveling very quietly and strictly incognito—I mean," she added, hastily, "we—we didn't let any of our friends here know that we were in Paris. If I could tell you just how piously I have to behave at home you wouldn't be surprised at my cutting loose here. I was in for a regular frolic when I sent Sophia home. I was going to dine alone in some restaurant, and then go to the Folies Bergères or some other dreadful place, the Olympia, maybe. You see it's all so ridiculously safe," she apologized; "not a soul would know me, and all the silly little Frenchmen would try to flirt with me. You see, no one ever tried to flirt with me in all my life!"

"Wha—at!" cried Livingstone.

"It's a fact," declared the girl.

Mr. Livingstone considered for a moment. Then he leaned eagerly over the table.

"Look here," he said, "don't chuck up your lark! I mean, alter it a bit to include me. Come and dine with me somewhere, and afterward we'll go to some music hall or theatre, and end up, if you like, at Maxim's. You shall flirt with all the little Frenchmen you want, and do just as you please, only—let me into the game."

The girl hesitated a moment, with a rather startled expression. She searched him with grave eyes. Then she laughed and clapped her hands.

"Done!" she cried. "Of course you know," she added, more soberly, "it's putting a good deal of trust in you. One couldn't do it with a Frenchman or any Continental." She laid her hand an instant on his arm

and smiled into his eyes. "I'll risk you," she said, gently.

Livingstone poked a finger into one of his waistcoat pockets and felt the sharp corner of a jeweler's little pasteboard box.

"I wish Jimmy Rogers might come walking by," he thought.

It was nearly six o'clock, and the terrace was rapidly filling with students and loungers, curious déclassés, boulevardiers of the Latin Quarter, well-to-do shopkeepers of the neighborhood, and everywhere extremely obvious young women with beautiful faces and the hands of a charwoman. Waiters rushed frantically among the little tables, under trays of long glasses and price-marked saucers, and presently there gleamed on all sides the opalescent yellow green of the absinthe that goes before every Frenchman's dinner.

The passing throng had become a crowd. Students in black wide-awakes, fiercely bearded and mustached, with flowing silk ties and very wide corduroy trousers; students again, the smarter ones, in shining top hats and very, very low cut waistcoats, with the same flowing ties, high-shouldered frock coats of black, and baggy trousers of the same color. Frenchmen, Russians with fair hair and big shoulders, Turks, Bulgarians, Englishmen with little caps and brier pipes. Intermingled here and there was a negro, for there is no color prejudice in Paris. And among them all, nearly outnumbering them, the omnipresent young women of full figure and the unshrinking, speculative eye.

"What a parade it is!" said Livingstone. "You won't find another such cosmopolitan crowd on any street in the world."

"I don't fancy them," answered the girl, shrugging her shoulders. "They may be picturesque, but they're so silly, with their big beards and their waving arms and their excited chatter over nothing! I like the street out beyond better," she went on, smiling, "where the soft Spring air is loaded with the odors of chestnut blossoms

and lilacs. It makes one fairly tingle inside!" She turned her shining eyes to him. "Doesn't it?"

"It does," said Mr. Livingstone, soberly. "And if I don't have a care I shall kiss you the next time you smile like that," he continued, inwardly. "I never saw such a mouth in all my life. Speaking of tingling inside," he went on, aloud, "where are we going to dine?"

"You're a brute!" cried the girl, indignantly. "You have no soul! You are a horrid, materialistic, unimaginative man! Still, of course we must dine somewhere. Well, take me where you will. I'm in your hands, *mon ami*. Only we must dine early if we are to go somewhere afterward. And do let it be here in the Quarter. I know the places on the other side so well—Voisin's and Larue's and Cubat's and Noël Peter's and all those."

They took a *fiacre* and drove down to the Boulevard St. Germain, stopping at last before a certain restaurant that advertised on its windows "*salons et cabinets particuliers*." The *dame du comptoir* seemed to know Livingstone, and gave him a merry *bon soir*, while the *maitre d'hôtel*, smilingly and without question, piloted the two to *cabinet particulier* No. 4 and gently closed the door on them.

The girl regarded Mr. Livingstone quizzically across the snowy little table.

"So you were afraid, after all, to trust me with the flirtatious Frenchmen," she said.

"Well," he admitted, "at least I wanted you all to myself. Do you mind?"

They had a very nice dinner indeed, though the girl smiled and shook her head when the waiter promptly called Mr. Livingstone by name and showed great familiarity with that gentleman's tastes.

"It seems that I have rather an advantage, monsieur," she laughed. "I know your name and you don't know mine."

"Won't you tell me?" he begged. "It can't do any harm, you know. I

shall probably never see you again after to-night."

"I don't know," she said, rather thoughtfully. "Well, I'll tell you enough of it to call me by. It's Carlotta Maria Victoria. That's the beginning. There is a lot more. I like Maria best; you may call me Maria, *mon Americain*. And now what shall I call you?"

"Oh, Gerald's my name, you know," he answered. "Gerald Augustus. Sometimes they call me Jerry and sometimes Gussie. But when they say 'Gussie' I generally fight. So perhaps Jerry would be best."

"Jeré, Jeré," said the girl, experimentally. "I like it, but I never heard it before. And what are you doing in Paris, Jeré, if you are an American?—which I don't believe."

Livingstone looked uneasily apologetic.

"Well, you see," he began, "I—I'm supposed to be a sort of artist, you know. I draw and paint a little. At least I'm believed to. I have a studio, anyhow. As a matter of fact, I don't do much but loaf about. And I'm here because I like Paris. And then, besides," he added, as if to strengthen his position, "Jimmy Rogers is here, so of course I have to be here, too. Jimmy's an architect of a sort. At least I think so. But oh, I say—" he leaned forward among the glasses protestingly—"don't let's talk about me; I'm such a useless, good-for-nothing duffer I'd rather talk about you." He twisted his little glass of chartreuse between his fingers and looked down at it. "Where did you get that wonderful voice of yours?" he asked. "You have the most curiously musical voice I ever heard. It's like—like a love song, everything you say. You must find a voice like that a bit dangerous, Maria."

"My voice?" she asked, wondering a little. "I didn't know there was anything unusual about my voice. Is it really nice? I'm glad, I think. Ah, you are trying to flirt with me," she cried, suddenly. "You shut me in here away from all the little

Frenchmen so that you could flirt with me alone."

Livingstone laughed, but turned grave again in a moment.

"I *am* rather on my honor in here, am I not?" he said. "No, I don't think I meant to shut you up and flirt with you. I don't believe I had planned it all out so completely, but I am grievously afraid I can't be trusted not to tell you a few important truths about yourself if we stop in here. Perhaps we'd best be going."

"Ah, no, no!" said the girl, hastily. "I—I wasn't really angry, you know. It merely occurred to me that— Oh, what were you going to say? Please commence just where you left off. What important truths do you want to tell me?" She made a little deprecatory face, but her cheeks were flushed and her eyes had a new light.

"What did you mean," he finessed, "by telling me at the Source that no one had even tried to flirt with you? I don't know where you live, but it's reasonable to suppose that there are men about—unless you inhabit a convent—and of course you know you are extraordinarily beautiful."

"Oh, I'm alone a good deal at home," she explained, impatiently, "or else with much older men, and the others—well, they wouldn't be likely to try flirting with me." She laughed a little, as if at some obscure joke. "Am I really beautiful?" she asked. "How? Please go into particulars; don't be so general."

"I told you," said Livingstone, "that your voice is like a love song. It has set my heart to dancing already, I'm afraid. And your hair—what a huge mass of hair you have, Maria *mia*. Your hair is almost more wonderful than your voice. Why, it must hang nearly to your feet and cover you like a cloak. And your eyes—they're more wonderful than your black hair. I shouldn't dare look into them long. One would find unexplored worlds there, Maria, untouched heavens. No, I shouldn't

dare look into them long. And you've a mouth—oh, my dear, you've a mouth I'd sell my kingdom for! Never did anyone have such a mouth. It sets one's blood to jumping, it sets one to dreaming of rose gardens and music and one's first kiss and all such foolish things—ah, don't ask me to tell you anything more!" he concluded. "Give me your coffee, Maria. Mine is all drunk and my heart is going like a water wheel, and my head—oh, Maria, Maria! with your black hair and your big eyes you'll have a madman on your hands directly."

He sat for a long time staring across the table under his brows, calling himself names below his breath and drinking Carlotta Maria's coffee.

"I believe," he resumed, presently, "you told the truth when you said no one had ever tried to flirt with you. There's a something about you—oh, I don't know what—an air, a something. I don't believe anyone ever made love to you, you who were made for love. Why did you trust yourself in here with me, Maria?"

The girl took her hands from her face. There were actually tears in her eyes, and her cheeks were very flushed.

"Look behind you in the mirror if you want to know," she said.

He turned with some alarm. "Is there anything the matter?" he demanded. "Of course I'm not properly dressed. A frock coat is not what I should voluntarily choose to dine in, but I hadn't a chance to change."

"Higher than the coat," said the girl. "Ah, *mon ami*," she cried, softly, "can't you see that you're just a gentleman? Why, I'd trust you anywhere on sight. Anyone would. If you had been a Frenchman I should have had to scream for help an hour ago. I think," she went on, slowly, after a little, "I think I am glad that you were the first to make love to me. Oh, Jeré, you must have been making love to girls all your life to do it so well. Is it true, oh, is it

true, dear boy, what you said—everything? Ah, if your heart is going, Jeré, I'm sadly afraid mine is going, too. Come, we must be off, or there'll be two mad people instead of one directly. Take me to something quiet, Jeré; no theatre, nor Maxim's, either. I'm—not quite myself. I want to think."

She turned and put her hands on his shoulders as he was helping her with her coat.

"Why wasn't I born in your world, Jeré? Ah, what tricks fate plays us! Why wasn't I born in your world?"

They went to the Concert Rouge in the Rue de Tournon, because it was near and because Livingstone said the music was good. He had stopped on the way by that morning and read the program posted in the window. There was to be the "Lohengrin" Vorspiel and some "Poète et Paysan" and the fifth and sixth Hungarian Dances of Brahms and "Wilhelm Tell," and altogether a very good list.

It was rather early, about half-past eight, and they had their choice of tables. So they took one in the back of the long room and ordered some liqueurs. The hall filled almost directly, and in ten or fifteen minutes the music began with a Waldteufel waltz.

Livingstone observed with some annoyance that a long table near them had been taken by a crowd of rather rowdy students, Spanish for the most part, with an Italian or two and one Russian, who were habitués of the place, and who, so someone had told him, were believed to be of anarchistic tendencies, refugees from their native soils, and regarded by the police as rather harmless *poseurs*. The Quarter is constantly full of such.

Touche, the leader of the orchestra, was playing, as a 'cello solo, the "Träumerei" of Schumann, when a newcomer joined the crowd at the long table. Carlotta Maria grasped Livingstone's arm. Her eyes were fixed on the man who had just come in, a sullen-looking fellow, Southern,

one would have said; and she was very pale.

"We must get out at once," she whispered. "No, not now. Wait till some more people come in to screen us. Let me sit a little behind you. If that fellow yonder sees me we shall both be in instant danger."

The man at the other table turned his head idly and faced them. Then he sat perfectly motionless, with cheeks that grew slowly livid. Carlotta Maria turned with a little sigh.

"It's all up," she said, quietly. "Come, we might as well get out, the solo is over." The fellow at the other table was talking swiftly to his friends, and they all stared with no attempt at concealment at the woman by Livingstone's side.

Livingstone was white with rage. "Just let me step over there an instant," he said. "I think I'll settle those chaps pretty quickly."

"No, no!" she cried. "Come, before the music commences. I'll explain outside. Ah, Jeré, Jeré, I've dragged you into danger."

They made their way out between the tables.

"God send there be a cab near!" breathed the girl. But there was no cab in sight.

"Down to the Boulevard St. Germain!" she cried. "We mustn't be caught here in the dark streets. Ah, hurry!"

"Too late, Carlotta *mia*," he said, looking backward. "They are after us already. Is it serious?"

"Serious? It's life or death!" whispered the girl.

He thrust her swiftly into the door of a little café that fronted the Rue de Tournon without a terrace.

"There's a chance yet," he said; "they haven't seen us."

A pair of burly Frenchmen sat in the rear of the tiny room playing dominoes, and behind the zinc bar the equally burly *patronne* was polishing glasses.

"A package of cigarettes, if you please, madame," said Mr. Livingstone. The café was also a *débit de tabacs*. "'*Vizirs Hongroises*.' Ah,

merci! Et une allumette, si vous en avez." His quick ear caught the sound of cab wheels over the stone pavement. The cab was coming down the street.

"If only it's empty!" he prayed. He stepped to the door, opened it and whistled. At the same moment someone standing by the wall struck at his head, and in an instant they were all about him. The cab slowed and stopped.

Livingstone drew back into the shop and closed the door.

"Messieurs," he said, quietly, to the big Frenchmen at their dominoes, "there are several ruffians outside who have been annoying madame—madame, my wife. May I ask your assistance in escorting madame to our *fiacre*?"

The men sprang up readily enough.

"We three ahead of madame, if you will," said Livingstone. Then to the girl: "If they have weapons we're done for. Don't wait for me—jump into the cab and bolt. Follow closely behind us." He swung open the door and they charged. It was three to six or eight, but the six or eight were poor stuff. Livingstone was a trained fighter and his two allies were big if not skilful.

He found himself lying back in the open *fiacre* with the girl bending over him, and the horse tearing down the Rue de Tournon at a gallop toward the lights and noise and bustle of the Boulevard. He had a comfortable recollection of the impact of strong, trained fists on a sodden face; no, two faces, and one that of the man who had come late to the Concert Rouge. His mind retained a pleasing image of two inert forms lurching down into the black hollow of the gutter, but his head swam horribly. It was numb at the back, as was the whole of one shoulder.

"We did them, Carlotta Maria," he murmured, with a little laugh. "But Lord, Lord, they nearly did us. They had knives, also a club, I believe, or a bit of lead. How did you get into the carriage?"

"You threw me in," she cried;

"don't you remember, Jeré? Oh, are you badly hurt? Jeré—Jeré—to have dragged you into this! Are you badly hurt, dear? Tell me!"

"Oh, I'm all fit enough," he protested, and tried to sit up, but something seemed to strike him violently over the eyes, and fiery stars wheeled eccentrically before him, so that he sank back against the cushions with a little cry.

The girl drew his head against her shoulder and told the *cocher* to drive fast.

"Listen, my dear," she said, her lips close to his cheek; "that man who came into the Concert Rouge was a countryman of mine whom I had—who was exiled a short time ago. There are reasons why I should not be at home just now, and also why I should not be recognized here. I have told the *cocher* to drive straight to my house. I shall leave Paris tomorrow when my uncle returns. It is no longer safe here. But that I should have dragged you into it all, Jeré! Can you sit up now?"

He found that he could sit up at the expense of a few stars and Catherine wheels, and with a queer sensation of sleepiness. One arm was nearly useless.

They drove for a long time. When he looked about him next they were across the river somewhere in the Étoile Quarter, where the buildings were high and gray and regular and imposing.

They stopped at last before a grille of twisted iron and bronze. The grille swung back and the horse's hoofs echoed in a courtyard. Two flunkies in uniform ran down the steps, and a door above opened, showing the gleam of many lights within.

The girl spoke to the servants in a language strange to Livingstone, but a man with a broken head has small interest in mysteries, and no curiosity. The footmen helped him from the carriage, one at either arm.

"You are coming in for a little while," said the girl.

He had a vague sense of lights, of red carpeting, of the soft voices of

servants, of interminable stairs up which he was practically carried, then a couch in a great, high, cool chamber, dim and restful, a couch with white pillows and soft springs. He thought he should probably lie there always.

Someone gave him brandy from a flask, a great deal of brandy. Someone else bound something deliciously cold over his head. Then there was quiet again, while his senses slowly returned, thanks to the brandy, and he looked about him.

The girl was standing near by at a table. She had garbed herself in some white, soft, loose garment that clung to her when she moved and hung in straight folds to the floor when she was still. She came over to him with a little glass in her hands and dropped on her knees at his side. She lifted his head very gently and held the glass to his lips.

"Drink it," she said, "every bit of it at once." It was diabolically nasty, but he drank it at a gulp and made a face. The girl gave a little soft laugh and laid his head back on the pillow, withdrawing her arm.

"I liked it the other way better," he complained. "A pillow's a poor substitute."

The girl moved closer yet to the side of the couch, and half-kneeling, half-sitting, laid her folded arms across his breast and leaned upon them. Her breath stirred his hair, was warm on his eyes and brow—Spring airs over gardens of roses and heliotrope and mignonette. Her face shone pale and soft and indeterminate so near him. In it her eyes were two great black shadows. Then a little fit of trembling shook him from head to foot.

"On my soul and body," he said, just above his breath, "I love you. I think you must be the most wonderful thing God ever made. On my soul and body I love you!" And he stirred his head restlessly, for the pain still shot through it from time to time in fiery little daggers.

Then Carlotta Maria laid her beautiful face to his. It was wet about the eyes and cheeks. Something

began to throb and shake inside him.

"On my soul and body," whispered Carlotta Maria, her lips against his cheek, "I love you. I think you are the bravest, truest, faithfulest gentleman that God ever made. On my soul and body I love you. No man's eye or hand," she went on, presently, still with her face to his, "no man's voice or word has ever turned my head to a second look, or stirred my heart to a quicker beat—till to-day. Ah, I think when I saw you in the street that day, over there at the Place de l'Opéra, something began in me, something stirred and wakened that I'd never felt before. Is it impossible, dearest? Can such things be? And afterward, at the Opéra and at the Source and in the restaurant, every glance of your eye, every motion of your hand, every little trick of manner and voice; your strong, brave smile, your steady eyes, set that something in me singing. When you told me that I was beautiful, when you said you wouldn't dare look long into my eyes, I seemed all at once to come into a great, gorgeous new world that almost frightened me. All my life long I've lived starved, shut in from what other girls have every day and grow used to. *My* heaven came all in one great burst of light and music and flowers and joy. I've dragged you, Jeré, into the keenest danger—God knows how ignorantly and unwillingly. Is it brutal, dear, to be actually glad of it? It has made you mine as nothing else in the world could. You've fought for me, you've been wounded for me, you've shown how brave and faithful and unhesitating a man can be for a woman's sake. It wasn't your quarrel. You knew nothing about it. You couldn't be sure that I wasn't a fleeing criminal, something vile. But you asked no questions, you had no doubts, and you risked your life to save me, with never a hesitating glance. Ah, that's what I call a gentleman! It has made you mine. You will never forget me now. You've saved my life. Indeed, you've done more than

you know, Jeré. Listen. That man at the concert—I hope you killed him—was one of a foolish party of people, very far from here, who believe that a certain country would be better off if—if I were out of it. They are very silly and shortsighted and very wrong, as they will see when they regain their heads. And their movement cannot succeed. It is doomed already. Furthermore, I must not be recognized in Paris, because I am wrongfully supposed to have been responsible for—for a foul injury to France. I should be mobbed and probably killed if I were known here. So you see, dearest of all the world, you have saved the destinies of a state to-night, not merely shielded a woman. But, ah, it's the woman who's glad, dear—it was the woman you meant to save; it's the woman who thanks you, and—loves you."

Then for a little while there was silence. The girl's face was hidden in her arms that lay on Livingstone's breast. The man tossed his head from time to time. The pain was lessening, but as the effects of the brandy passed off, the numbness, the dizzy swimming returned and made everything dreamlike, unreal and very far away.

Presently the girl raised her head and spoke again. Her voice was very sad and tired, and had a pitiful little break in it.

"And this is all, my darling," she said. "My happiness came swiftly, and it must go swiftly. I think I am glad I lived just for this day. Tomorrow I go back, back where I belong and where my duty lies. They—they're going to marry me in a few months to a man I have never seen——"

Livingstone gave a stifled cry and struggled to one elbow.

"By the Lord, they sha'n't!" he said, fiercely. "Marry you to some other man, when you love me and I love you? You're mad, Maria! It's absurd!"

She pushed him back very gently on the pillows and leaned over him as before.

"Do you suppose, my dear," she murmured, "that I would lose you if it could be helped? Do you think I'd marry anyone else if it weren't a heaven-sent duty? You don't understand, sweetheart. You will read it all in the papers soon, and know. I mustn't tell you now. Don't make it any harder for me, Jeré, for my heart is breaking. I'm only a girl who loves you, loves you, loves you, and who will live out all her life dreaming of you and of your love for her."

She rose and went to the table in the middle of the room, and came back with a tiny jeweled and enameled cross. It seemed to be an order of some kind. She pinned it on his breast and took his face between her two hands and kissed him on the lips.

"Wear it always, my dearest," she said. "There are but five others in the world like it. They have been given to soldiers for distinguished service, acts of heroism. There has been no service so distinguished as yours. There has been no man in all the world who has held a woman's heart and soul so wholly in his hands." And she laid her face beside his, sobbing.

Livingstone mastered with all his strength the daze and whirl and numbness of his aching head. He pulled out of his waistcoat pocket a little jeweler's box, and took from it the opal ring.

"I've got a confession to make about this," he said. "I bought it the other day just because it was pretty, but Jimmy Rogers happened along and would not believe I had no further object. So—so I made a rather blackguardly wager with him that I would put it on the finger of any woman he might choose out of the crowd. He—he chose you. I was sorry about it directly after, especially when I had met you at the Terminus. I had no intention of trying to carry out my wager. You believe that, don't you, Maria *mia*? But—but now will you forgive me for insulting you, even for an instant? And will you wear this, as I shall wear my cross—always?"

She kissed the ring and let him slip it over her finger.

"You never did a blackguardly thing in all your life," she said—"or thought one, either. And I'll wear your ring as long as I live, as I carry your love in my heart."

Then she said no more for a long time, but laid her cheek against his brow and fell to stroking his hair where it curled from the bandage.

"I must go," he said at last, and put her from him and rose dizzily to his feet.

"Yes," she whispered, "yes, you must go now. It is late. Oh, my darling, you must go!" She stood shaking by the table. He dared not look at her face.

He took a long draught of cognac from the flask—he needed it sadly—and loosened the bandage from his head. He could walk with fair ease now, and his brain was moderately clear. He had meant to leave the room with no further word, but his eye caught the white, swaying figure by the table, and he sprang to her and took her in his arms.

"I won't be less brave than you," he whispered; "so good-bye, and no more words. If ever you need me again, call me and I'll come."

Then he kissed her two hands, not her lips this time, and went quickly out of the room.

"The carriage is waiting for milor," said one of the footmen below. "Her Majesty has given orders that I should accompany milor to his home."

"Her who?" demanded Livingstone.

"Her Majesty the Queen," said the man, in surprise.

Livingstone rubbed a hand over his hot brow and fixed the lackey with a fevered eye.

"Queen of—?" he asked.

"Her Majesty the Queen of Campania, naturally," said the servant, with sympathy. He thought the English milor must be very dazed indeed.

"Of Campania—naturally," agreed Mr. Livingstone, and the news item in the *Soir* came into his mind. "I

shall not need you," he said, wearily, to the lackey. "Tell the *cocher* to drive slowly."

The next morning, at eleven, Jimmy Rogers strolled into Livingstone's studio and found that young man actually at work, in a dressing-gown and slippers, and with a bandaged left arm.

"You're drunk!" cried Jimmy Rogers, in amazement, "or daffy. Who ever knew you to work?"

Livingstone blew some *fixatif* over his drawing and made no answer.

"Oh, by the way," said Jimmy Rogers, "about that wager——"

"Ah, that wager," commented Livingstone. "Well, I chuck that up. I'll owe you a thousand francs. I don't want to go on with it."

Jimmy Rogers laughed. "You're growing sensible," he approved. "I was just about to advise you not to try it on that woman I pointed out to you on the Boulevard the other day. I don't want to get you into trouble. Do you know who that woman was? Do you? That was Queen Carlotta

of Campania. I saw her once before in Vienna."

"Really!" said Mr. Livingstone, without enthusiasm.

"What the devil is that thing on your waistcoat?" demanded Jimmy Rogers. He came over and looked closely at the decoration. Then he stared his chum in the eyes. "That," said he, slowly, "is the cross of St. Petros. There are just six of them in the world, and a certain Queen who is the last descendant of the twelfth-century founder of the Order has the sole power to grant them." He took Livingstone by the shoulders and turned his face to the light. He looked at the bandaged arm, the bruised head and the dark circles under the eyes.

"Where is that opal ring?" he demanded, after a while.

"That?" said Livingstone, calmly; "why, I've lost it."

"Of course you're lying," murmured his friend. "But—I wonder——"

"Yes," said Mr. Livingstone, "I'm lying. What then?"



A PRIORI

"IF you loved me as I love you—"
This is the faithful swain's complaint,
The old lament that's ever new
To lady fair from lover faint.

Yet sadly I reflect we two
Not thus the heights of bliss may touch;
If you loved me as I love you
I wouldn't love you half so much.

G. T.



DRIVEN DESPERATE

SHE—If I should refuse you, Mr. Ardent, would you go off and do some foolish thing?

HE—Yes; I'd marry some other girl, no doubt.

AT THE ACADEMY

By Herbert Dansey

THE Princess turned away from the painting with a sudden graceful movement, as one desirous of breaking a spell.

"I tell you it is a cruel picture," she said. "Think of all the centuries that picture will live! Think of going down to posterity with all that load of infamy!"

"I suppose," said I, "it is better to go down to posterity with a load of infamy than not go down to posterity at all. These people would all be forgotten in a hundred years if they had not had themselves painted by some great genius. Who would have remembered all the people Rembrandt painted, let us say, if his divine brush had not written their memory into the heart of mankind?"

"It's all very well, but there are some pictures that tell too much."

"Have I been lucky enough to recall some story to your mind?" I asked.

"You have," said the Princess. "But let us sit down somewhere and rest. Now there," she added, "are two nice chairs and a palm tree."

"And a few Cockney tourists in the foreground," said I.

"Oh, you can't get away from Cockneys nowadays, even at Court. Do you know, I think England is changing so terribly. It's becoming nothing but London. Think of the time when there will be omnibuses to John o' Groats, and a straight row of houses all the way to Manchester!"

"But the story," I insisted.

"What were we talking about? Ah, I remember—pictures that are cruel. Well, did you ever hear of the Marquise de la Rocheverville? Oh, yes, surely you must remember her. She

was one of the Paulton girls—Lady Julia's daughter, who quarreled so at Homburg over . . . Just so—the fair one, who married the attaché, Henri de la Rocheverville. Well, you know he hadn't much money, and Lady Julia, of course, was wild at the marriage and refused to see her daughter after it took place."

"Quite right," said I. "Lady Julia was always of opinion that good marriages are only to be made in London, and unhappy ones in the other places."

"Including heaven? Well, Caroline, who became 'Lolotte' on her transplantation to French soil, soon discovering that the resources of Rocheverville could not suffice for the requirements of both herself and him, very properly looked out for some way to augment her revenues, and not being of an emigrating turn of mind, she bethought herself, instead, of the immigrants, and gave herself up to them. She scanned the horizon for the approaching transatlantics and pounced on the ones desirous of entering Parisian society as an eagle pounces on its prey. The office of social pilot is quite a career nowadays, I am told, and far more profitable than the stage or nursing. Of course, you have to have the necessary qualifications—a title, an immaculate or rather an unflinching reputation, and the entrée into society. All these, of course, through Lady Julia and Rocheverville, Caroline had at her disposal. Now, two or three years ago—three it must be, for I met them at Pau—Caroline Lolotte was touring the fashionable resorts with Mrs. Henry Vansittart Vandam, of Buffalo. Buffalo suited Mrs.

Vandam. Even if one had not known it, one would have said she came from Buffalo. Buffalo seems so very American, somehow. Well, Mrs. Henry Vansittart Vandam was a nobody then; now she is Mrs. Vansittart Vandam, and goes in to dinner after Royalties and before Duchesses. But I must admit she was always a clever woman.

"Like all Americans, I suppose she wanted to have her money's worth, and this did not quite suit Caroline, who of course had to spend a by no means indifferent sum in clothes, which were nothing more or less than implements of her trade. Now it came to pass that Mrs. Vansittart Vandam's celebrated diamond necklace was stolen one day, and under very suspicious circumstances. The best French detectives were put on the track, but all their efforts proved useless, though the case against Lolotte Rocheverville was very black indeed. Suddenly the whole affair was hushed up, and though in public the Marquise and the American were still friends, yet for good reasons they no longer traveled together. I have told you that Mrs. Vansittart Vandam was a clever woman, and she had learned that one thing you cannot play with on this side of the ocean is the Law Court. You may be as honest as the day, as pure as a diamond, as chaste as snow, but if you play with the Law Courts you are beneath contempt, so even though she was positive Lolotte had not been able to resist temptation, she refrained from giving her up to the law. Yet she was not an American for nothing. The desire was keen to 'be even' with the little woman who had done her out of her jewels, and it bothered her night and day; so that Carlsbad did her no good that year, nor did even the Emperor's smiles appease her.

"One day in Paris someone told her of a pitiful case of poverty. A young painter full of genius was actually dying of starvation, for the usual good reason that all real artists are always the silliest people on God's earth.

Mrs. Vansittart Vandam played Lady Bountiful, and in this case she played it to some advantage, for the artist was Paul Bonhomme, now the great portrait painter who has just painted Bagdad's portrait. You may imagine that after this kindness she might have ordered him to hang or quarter himself and he would have obeyed her.

"One day Mrs. Vansittart Vandam arrived at his studio with two portraits, one of herself and one of Lolotte. 'I want you,' she said, 'to do something for me, but it must be a dead secret. You see this portrait—' presenting Lolotte's picture; 'you are to paint a large-sized portrait of a lady like this one, and yet not like. The original has fair hair, and you will give your lady red hair; the original has dark eyes, and you will put in blue ones, yet the two portraits will look like the same person. Round the neck of your picture you will put a diamond necklace exactly like the necklace in this portrait—' showing her own. 'Now,' she added, 'if the picture suits me and it is hung at the Salon, and if you keep faith and my secret, I will give each of your children 10,000 francs.'

"Paul Bonhomme was poor Paul Bonhomme, and knew nothing of the story. He painted the picture, and was truly thankful; and it was hung on the line at the Salon, where all Paris came, saw and understood.

"It was the cruellest thing I remember, and Lolotte could do or say nothing at all, for she would only have made matters worse. Her friends said, 'What can you expect of Americans?' but they went to the Americans' parties and drank the Americans' champagne, and they were extra civil to the Americans.

"Yet," continued the Princess, "it was a less cruel thing than that picture we were standing before just now."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because it told a tale only to the people who knew at the moment, and this picture tells the truth to all the world and will tell it to all eternity. *Chad guia, chad guia,*" she sighed.

THE AMERICAN GIRL

By the Infanta Eulalie

WHY do I make a study of Girlology? Because it is the most elevating of all studies. If the logic of language permitted me to say so I should boldly assert that it is nobler than the noblest study, the latter being the study of man. I give thought to the American girl because, as a French writer calls her, she is a walking statue. You will find American girls to-day more beautiful than Grecian beauties in the days of Menander, or Roman women of the time when Marcus Aurelius philosophized.

I have studied American girls on their native heath, I have met them in Paris, I have observed them in every centre of European fashion. Thus I have had an opportunity of observing them closely, and invariably they achieved distinction. Let me qualify a little. Observe that I speak of American girls, and not of American young widows. There is a vast distinction. The latter are frequently too artful. In their case art does not conceal art. They often play on the credulity of titled foreigners, pretending that they are millionaires when they have scarcely enough to pay their hotel bills. Under this false pretense they accept attentions and proffered hospitalities that European men of station would otherwise never think of according to them. Some may call this a just Nemesis, for men of title look on all American women as rich heiresses or millionaires.

In discussing the American girl I mean, of course, what is known in the United States as the Society Girl. Vast numbers of American girls visit Europe annually who have no claim

to the title of Society Girl. America is the only country where young women of no real standing in life can afford to travel. They need no apologist, but they are not the girls of whom I speak directly. Yet the United States is the only country in the world where village maidens quickly ripen into *grandes dames* the moment an opportunity offers.

Girls should be tactful. This holds good in speech, in act and in letter-writing. The American girl is intelligently tactful. Why is it that their letters make such good literature? It is because there is an intellectual warmth running through their epistles. Watch a bevy of these bright girls as they write their letters in some attractive hotel, and you will readily grasp my meaning. They have delicacy as well as tact. They know whether a man courts them merely through habit or is inspired by the grand passion. Some men, from sheer force of habit, pay attentions to women which might easily lead the latter to believe they are really loved.

It is trite to talk of the independence of the American girl. We of Southern civilization can understand it with difficulty. Chaperons, duennas, mothers are invariably dinned into our ears as persons who must always be in evidence with us while we are young girls. The genesis of this is easily traceable. It comes from the Orient, where women's faces are hardly ever seen. It might even be traced to the harem. The Moors brought it to Spain. Coming northward the restraint grows less. It is milder in France than in Spain. It

is mildest in England. It does not exist in the United States.

In Europe the young girl is a perpetual candidate for marriage. In Europe the bridegroom selects the bride; in the United States the bride as often as not chooses the bridegroom. There they have liberty before matrimony; here, freedom comes after marriage.

American young women are trained physically just as well as American young men. Gymnastics give them broad shoulders and strong arms, and they ride a horse or a bicycle with equal ease and grace. They swim like sirens and they sing like nightingales. They skate with the grace of a French professor and they play tennis with a supple agility that calls forth continuous rounds of applause. Their vitality is enormous. Perhaps it is coeducation that gives them their great moral courage. They are not afraid of men. Their photographs are in newspapers side by side with politicians, singers, lecturers and actors. Here none but singers, actresses and demi-mondaines have their pictures in newspapers. Here young women hide virtues that would benefit the public.

A man is expected to admire discreetly a Frenchwoman, a Spaniard, an Italian or an Englishwoman. I say discreetly, for if he does not look at all it is a bad compliment; if he looks at her too staringly he is rude. The American girl likes to be looked at openly. American and Irish girls are probably the only ones in the world who can look frankly and fearlessly, and whose honest glances are not tempered by conventionality. The American girl is not only supremely independent, but very natural. This is the result of globe-trotting.

Americans pay more court to their women than do the men of any other nation. This is the reason why the women are so perfect. Treat any race or section of a race well, and you improve it. You give it a higher opinion of itself and make it ambitious. American girls are ambi-

tious to live up to the high opinion formed of them by their compatriots. It is said that the American girl rules the United States. I do not think this is true. She expresses her opinion frankly and fearlessly no matter who are present. Gruff old professors might frown her down, but it is always well to hear the promptings of fresh souls. In the case of the American girl I should say, paradoxically, that though she leads man she follows him.

She forms clubs. If young men have clubs she does not see why young women should not have them also. She does not abuse club life; it gives her intellectual and social pleasure. She goes abroad practically when she pleases, and when she does so she is like the old conquistadors of my own country—she goes, she sees, she conquers. Intelligence and beauty combined with cash are invincible. Speaking of intelligence, I have never yet met an American girl who could not do something of interest or who had not some striking accomplishment.

There are as many different types of female beauty in America as there are in all the countries of Europe taken together. Louisiana, the Pacific coast country, the Northwestern States, the great Middle States, New England—all furnish diverse types. The Chicago beauty is far from being the same as the Boston girl of society. The warm-blooded Virginian is quite different from the horse-riding girl of Kentucky. The dreamy Louisianian has a characteristic beauty that is as different from the strong graces characteristic of the Californian as moonlight from sunlight. The New England girl can go near the flame and yet not burn.

When American girls go abroad and marry foreigners they are affectionate not only in proportion to the attention they receive, but also by reason of the dowry that they give. This looks like an unqualified eulogium. There is one little point, however, that I should like to sug-

gest. In Europe a well-trained young girl has invariably what is called *l'air de couvent*. It is difficult to put into words what this is. It is a certain demureness, or perhaps sweet gentleness almost amounting to bashfulness, that men looking for wives very much admire in young girls. In other words, it is

the absence of excessive pushfulness. We sometimes think that the American girl is a little too pushful. She can afford, however, to have one slight drawback just to show that human nature is not perfect, even in the American Society Girl. But she carries the flag of triumphant democracy all over the world.



UNLAURELED

I KNEW the crags were thunder-swept and blown
By storms of sleet, the paths were overgrown
With thorns and brambles, yet I set my face
To Fame, and trod the stony way alone.

Not for myself I sought the unknown prize,
But that I might seem worthy in the eyes
Of those who loved me; finding thus, I thought,
Full recompense for any sacrifice.

But all in vain I toiled through thorns and snares
And gained the wreath awaiting him who dares
I bow my throbbing temples to the dust
Unlaureled, oh, my heart, for no one cares!

KATHERINE LA FARGE NORTON.



IF SHE HAD ONLY KNOWN!

"I AM mad for love of you," he said. "Your eyes haunt me; your face comes between me and the saints to whom I pray, and your smile takes away my speech. I would die for you gladly; I would be content to live your slave. I love you so much that I do not even need to be near you, for I carry you in my heart continually, and I am at your feet in spirit forever."

Then she laughed, for his words were very amusing.

"You have ruined my life," he said. "You are cruel and false and soulless. I will blot out your image from my heart. I will never love a woman again, for you have taught me what all women are—vain and shallow and fickle. Your beauty is a snare, and your heart is harder than stone."

Then she laughed, for his words were very amusing.

"It is curious I should have thought that I loved you," he said. "I fancied I could not live without you; but life is a serious thing, and a man has his career. . . . I'm afraid I must have behaved in a rather silly fashion—I think I even called you hard names; I hope you have forgotten. If I ever meet the right woman, be sure I shall appreciate her better for having known you."

Then she began to love him, and his words weren't a bit amusing. However, if she had only known, he was not more than half in earnest any of the time!

M. E. BAKER.

BALLAD OF SARAH JANE

A PILGRIM went to the O-ri-ent
 And his heart was cleft in twain;
 There was half for Bess and a half for Jess
 (But none for Sarah Jane),
 And he sware them both with a solemn oath
 They'd ever be leal and true,
 And he softly spake of the gold he'd make,
 With a wedding in constant view.
 (But to Sarah Jane he said nothing at all,
 And she silently sorrowed in bower and hall.)

The day was late at the distant date
 When the traveler came again,
 And Jess was dead and Bess was wed
 (But there was Sarah Jane);
 And the pilgrim swore he would rove no more,
 But—alas, that it so should be!—
 He'd nothing at all to marry withal,
 Nor pay the parson's fee;
 And he thought with a pang of the wealth he'd spent
 At several shrines in the O-ri-ent.

But Sarah Jane was proud and fain—
 A maiden true was she—
 She spake no blame nor cried, "For shame!"
 But laughed in gladsome glee,
 Said, "Here be rings and lots of things
 Worth thirty thousand pound;
 Engagements score I've broke, and more,
 While you've been traipsing round;
 Here's things from Tim and rings from Jim,
 And more from Henry Bill;
 They'll keep us well in a big hotel
 Or a house on Primrose Hill!"
 And the angels rejoiced in the faith and the truth
 Of the beautiful maid and the resolute youth.

FRANCIS DANA.



WILLING TO GRATIFY HER

MRS. BENHAM—Mother says she believes in cremation—that she wants
 to be cremated herself.

BENHAM—Wait a minute and I'll get a match.

THE PATHOS OF BEING GOOD

By Kate Jordan

(Mrs. F. M. Vermilye)

THE Englishwoman, who was learning odd things about the amusing, rich New Yorkers, had let her sables slip back from her shoulders and was contentedly sipping a brandy and soda in the American woman's boudoir. The latter, in loose silk and slippers, was drinking tea.

"I suppose, my dear Mrs. Dane, being a Van Vieck means something?" asked Lady Blount.

"Why, it means having an early eighteenth-century house on lower Second avenue, stacked from basement to roof with Colonial stuff that fairly reeks with the history of the family—a house where Lafayette danced with the hostess. Yes, it means something to be a Van Vieck in New York."

"How indigenous, my dear, is the greatness of untitled people! In Cork or Manchester, for instance, no one would feel any particular interest in this conspicuous Peter Van Vieck."

"But Peter hasn't only family——"

"Has he—that?"

"As we understand it. The first Van Vieck was a market gardener or a fur trader, of course, but like all those early Dutch hucksters who made money, he has a trail of gentry somewhere back of him in Holland or Spain or France."

"I like to hear you chaff your own set. It's so American."

"As I was saying, Peter Van Vieck has money. He is distressingly rich. He lives on about twenty or twenty-five thousand a year, while his scores of millions just roll and grow with the years."

"A born miser, who gets no fun out of life?"

"No; he's not of this age, that's all. The times don't suit Peter. To spend money on steam yachts or racing stables would be an immense bore. He is an explorer by nature, and he gives big sums to support his fads, but they don't even make dents in his fortune. He is very original—and oh, so good! I shall never forget the afternoon he came here and refused to marry me."

Mrs. Dane flung back her head and laughed unrestrainedly. Her loosened hair, which had not been waved that day, lent picturesqueness to her prettiness. She was only just past thirty, and the idea that any man had refused to marry her seemed absurd.

"What an ass!" said Lady Blount.

"Oh, I wouldn't have missed the experience for the world. You see it was this way: Mr. Dane was thirty-three years my senior. I was his ward. The poor, kind, near-sighted old dear didn't know what to do with me. Marriage was the only way out of the difficulty. As for me, I looked on him as my release from that dreadful Quebec convent. He died seven years ago, and left a curious clause in his will. He was famous as an antiquarian, and had collected a perfect museum. Well, he willed this to Peter if he and I married within three years after his death. If not, it went as a gift to his native Western town. Peter was a cousin of whom he was extravagantly fond. He used to say he was the only good man he ever found interesting. Well, Peter—a great chum

of mine, by the way—simply thirsted for that museum, but he wouldn't have me. I was too much of a prevalent type, he said. I don't suppose I *am* like anything you've ever seen on an old fresco, nor could any Egyptologist, no matter how much he was biased in my favor, by any chance discover that I am Cleopatra reincarnated. In fact, I'm a new soul, with the marks of the mint on me, and mundane to my very toes. So what chance had I with Peter, who feels akin to almost every age but this, and who hates the telephone and the automobile as devices of the devil? I like his eyes, those dreamy, dark-blue eyes, that seem always searching for what eludes him, and I like his millions, but—he won't have me."

"I'll bet you the best box of silk stockings in the Rue de la Paix you'll be aghast when you see what he does fall in love with some time and lead to the altar," said Lady Blount, in disgust; "some doll-eyed music-hall singer——"

"No, he'll never do that. Our men leave that for the titled johnnies of your island, my dear. Oh, he'll never fall in love at all. His passion is for unexplored mountain peaks, Egyptian tombs and things of that sort. He has a lot of men digging in Mexico now for something or other. But let me tell you the queerest thing he ever did. He had a valet years ago who was an odd creature. The man could scarcely read, but a fine painting, or music, or a beautiful scene used to tear him with a sort of agony, and he began to tell Peter of the strange yearnings that beauty roused in him. Peter insisted that he was miscast in the drama of life, got a tutor for him, made him enter college, settled a nice little annuity on him, and he is now a poet, with a new name and a manufactured history to match. But, ye gods! my dear, such poetry as he writes!"

Lady Blount shrugged her cape over her shoulders and finished her glass.

"It's a good thing he let that

museum slip. Such a husband would be a dreadful bore."

"And yet," said Mrs. Dane, softly, "I'd marry him to-morrow—to-night—in half an hour."

"His millions——"

"No, his eyes, his voice, his dear, honest, queer self, so different from the rest. If they're young and good-looking they're generally vain, and you wonder if the gray matter was left out when their skulls were built; if they've become interesting by reason of years and experience they think more of a good dinner than anything else. Now Peter is not goody-goody, but he is good. I'd take him with his dreams and his eyes and his child's heart. Some day, when his illusions go quite back on him, maybe he'll come to me."

"Why, I believe you are in love with the man!"

"Bless me! have you just found that out?"

II

PETER seldom rode in a street car, and never before in one that clanged its insistent way after leisurely, provoking drays and beer wagons on the Bowery. He had come here to hunt for an old Russian collector, the possessor of a missal he coveted, and a whim had suggested his conducting the search in the most unobserved fashion. He was happy when a whim seized him, and followed it often when it seemed absurd or impossible.

With his explorer's instinct awake he looked at the people he sat among, and marveled at how dull and distasteful poverty was in the big cities of the civilized world. Otherwhere it was not repulsive; half-starved Bedouins craving a handful of figs; poor Algerian women in baggy trousers going up and down their stairway streets; bare-legged Irish peasants among the bogs, their cheeks like wild roses; West Indian slaves with bare, orange-colored backs and gaudy bandannas—all those could

please the eye, but these poor people of the city were only unclean, ill-nourished bodies in ugly clothes. They were the sort he helped generously through various charitable channels looked after by his secretary, but while he pitied them poignantly he instinctively shrank from them.

The woman diagonally opposite to him in the car suddenly turned round. She had been seated sideways, watching the street, and he had noticed only the low, massive knot of black hair beneath a worn brown turban, her threadbare jacket strained at the seams and the skirt with muddy edges. But when she turned his interest was seized and held. The car with its drab, disconsolate cargo caught a touch of rose color.

Peter sat back and studied her. If her beauty had been consistent with a Third avenue car—an unintellectual face with round eyes and baby mouth, for instance—he would have been only troubled that a pretty girl should be so poor. But this woman seemed alien to her environment. She had no business there at all. Her dark eyes, with lashes brushing her cheeks like moth wings, seemed heavy with a longing for France. So might a marquise of the fifteenth century have looked, a dreamy exquisite, capable, it might be, of softest cruelty, smiling in her rose-paneled boudoir as from affronted vanity she plotted treachery and revenge. So might Marion Delorme have looked as she swept through her gardens with her lapdogs following.

As he stared solemnly at the sad-eyed beauty, marking the petulance of her rose-red mouth, he saw in fancy a long line of ghostly belles, powdered and patched bewitchingly, eying him over their little fans, enter at one door of the car and pass out through the other into the gray air.

He blinked the waking dream away, and became aware that he was acutely depressed, touched in his most sensitive point—his idea of artistic fitness. Here was this lovely, opulent creature, a woman of France, fashioned by na-

ture for luxury, for ease, but placed by grim-visaged Circumstance in an environment that must mean a continual suffering and aggravation.

"A damask rose in the bosom of a drab would not be more contradictory," he thought.

She left the car at one of the miserable streets that straggle down to the East River. Without consciously deciding to do so, he followed her. The Russian collector was forgotten in this new quest. Yet none of the ordinary incentives of the situation was troubling Peter. The woman did not appeal to any personal sentiment. She was a new gem, badly set, a curio more interesting for the time being than the missal he had come to find.

Her walk pleased him. She advanced undulantly and with short steps, as a lazy beauty walks who, alighting briefly, is conveniently followed by her carriage. It hurt Peter to see her make her graceful way between ash heaps and the battered railings of houses that sheltered mis-
erables.

At the open door of a dirty house smaller than the others she stopped. After a speculative glance at him over her shoulder she passed in. He went down the street, turned back and looked again at the doorway. Who was she? What was her name? What had been her mission that gray, muddy morning? A tin sign at the side of the door attracted him:

VINCENZO BOTTELLI

VIOLIN TAUGHT

Music Furnished for Parties

Ah, they danced among this wretchedness, did they? Was Vincenzo Bottelli her brother, her husband?

He was lingering indecisively when he saw a piece of folded yellow paper on the ground, and remembered vaguely that it had fluttered from her jacket as she entered the house. His search for treasures had often led him to pawnshops, and when he picked up the brown slip he recognized it as that affidavit of misery, a pawn-ticket.

At the top he saw the name, "Bottelli." She had pawned a coat.

Peter was too disturbed to continue the adventure to an end that day. Neither did the missal attract him now. He would go back to his own world and forget penury and ugliness. He put the pawn-ticket in his pocket, and at the corner took the car going up-town.

III

He was back again the next morning. During one of the gayest dinners of the Winter, with everyone in costume and a vaudeville skit following, the memory of this woman had been to him what a hair shirt is to a monk. There was nothing but goodness in Peter's heart as he went up those decrepit stairs and knocked at the first door he saw.

It was opened by the woman whose face had haunted him all night. She wore a flannel wrapper, the top button unfastened, leaving her full throat free. A flicker of recognition lighted her eyes.

"Good morning, sare," she said, resting on one foot, her hip lifted lazily; "weel you step in?"

Peter bowed and obeyed. At the sight of the room he felt his soul sicken. How could she live there with such a carpet? He looked once at the framed immortelles and mottoes on the walls, the rain-stained paper, and then for repose gazed at his boots. When he looked up the woman had buttoned her gown at the throat, and in an attitude of unwitting but superlative grace had seated herself against a worsted pillow on the sofa opposite.

"You weesh to see my 'osban' for music, sare? 'E is in Cincinnati," she began, but Peter held out the pawn-ticket. "Oh, how I 'ave look for heem," she exclaimed, seizing it; "you found heem?"

"Yes, I found it," said Peter, in French.

At the words he had the satisfaction of seeing her face grow wistfully happy, like an expectant child's.

"I thank you very much indeed," she said, in the same tongue, and though her accent was not quite of the Faubourg, it was very pretty.

She waited, and Peter looked again at his boots. How could he put in words what he had expressly come to say? He was quite aware of the unusualness of his intention, and feared his interest might bear the common interpretation. But he was used to doing the exceptional thing. Only the introduction was difficult; that over, it was easy sailing.

"Your husband, madame, is a musician—Bottelli—name on the door?" he said at last, in his pleasant voice.

"Yes. He is now in Cincinnati. He was promised a place in an orchestra there. The Winter here has been hard."

While she answered him he could see that he puzzled her. If he had only come to return the pawn-ticket she was wondering why he sat there as if he meant to stay.

"You are poor. Are you not very poor?" he blurted, his face coloring. "Forgive me if I hurt you."

"You do not hurt me. *Me voici*, I am poor!" and looking down at her dingy gown, she held up the pawn-ticket and gave a dismal laugh.

"You long for France, don't you?—for Paris, perhaps?" he said, eagerly, and a gladness for having followed his impulse rushed over him when he saw a luxurious longing pass as a veil over her soft eyes.

"Ah, Paris!" she sighed; "that is far away—no more for me. *Oh, mon cher Paris, je ne vous reverrai jamais.*"

Peter's kind heart fairly yearned over her in paternal fashion. She was so lovely as she sat there amid squalor, lamenting her lost land. The thought of his useless millions and what might be done with an infinitesimal part of them comforted him.

"You must not despair, madame," he said, rising, "I may be able to help you to return to Paris, if you will let me. You know nothing about me, but you can find out. Here is

my card and address. Will you permit me to become one of your friends?"

The woman's dimpled mouth trembled curiously for an instant and her lashes fell. She looked at his card and seemed considering his proposition seriously.

"Sir," she said, slowly, at last, "all that you say to me fills me with hope—but I am puzzled. I see you are the great, rich man the papers talk so much about—but I don't understand. You wish to be my friend, to help me as you say? Why do you do this for me—for me?" and she laid her index finger on her bosom.

Peter's nature was not complex. He never left the straight and simple path of honesty except when to remain there was suicidal. The amazing truth was the first thing that occurred to him. Standing there, young, good-looking, the marks of the fine world upon him, his dark-blue eyes filled with the enthusiast's fervor, he made his uncompromising explanation.

"I wish to serve you unselfishly, madame. Please do not misunderstand me. I am attracted to you only to help you, as I would a child. My course of action is unusual, but then I am one of life's exceptions. I am fortunate enough to be able to follow my impulses—anywhere. To see you as you are, poor, misplaced, takes away satisfaction in my own life. The first glimpse I had of you in the car told me you were unhappy. I knew your dream was for France, and France without the bane of poverty. I cannot put away such impressions lightly, madame. If I did so I should seem to myself a thing wholly of clay. Thank God, I need never crucify a generous instinct. But I am not a philanthropist in the practical sense alone. I am also a worshiper of beauty in any form. Your beauty, like a red rose heavy with perfume, but set in a swamp, made its own silent prayer to me without your knowing it, and so—I am here."

Madame Bottelli still fingered the card, looking down. She smiled

shyly when after a pause she answered him:

"You may come—any time."

IV

PETER found his way three times to Stanton street, in the late gray afternoons, his coming preceded by a box of roses.

Madame Bottelli's face had changed in expression since the day she dropped the pawn-ticket. It was electric with hope and suspense, her beauty acquiring a new emphasis that would have troubled any benefactor not as uniquely good as Peter.

He could see she made attempts to improve her poor gowns with bits of tawdry lace. Sometimes she wore one of his roses in her hair, a badge of coquetry. She gave him coffee in a cheap Japanese cup without a handle, and he drank it uncomplainingly. What his set might think could they have seen him, whose *cordons bleus* was famous, drinking coffee in a tenement house with a poor beauty in a pink wrapper, never even faintly troubled him. He was heart and soul obsessed by his idea, the longing to rescue this woman from the juggling of an unkind fate and give her the place she was fitted for in the world—give her happiness. She was so truly a woman of France, fashioned so strikingly for "perfumes, soft textures, lace, a half-lit room."

On this third visit the conversation took a practical tone. It was time to speak of her husband. The fact that she had one rather spoiled the picture. As a type Madame Bottelli should have been anything except a prosaically devoted wife. Peter felt a desire to wipe out the husband as he would a false shadow in a painting. But the man existed, and if she loved him, why, he must reap the benefit of having a wife who suggested a French marquise to an eccentrically good and beneficent millionaire with a penchant for originality.

"Since you will permit me to help you," said Peter, serious-eyed, "I will make arrangements by which

you will receive an income sufficient for you to live comfortably in Paris, enough to afford you some luxuries, too, madame. What you require for a proper wardrobe before leaving and your passage money I will give you whenever you wish. Then leave this place behind you forever—have what you desire!”

“How good you are to me!” murmured Madame Bottelli, giving him a soft glance full of meanings quite lost on her companion. “Oh, my friend!” She covered her eyes with her handkerchief and extended her hand. Peter pressed it abruptly in his honest clasp, and dropped it.

“Now, madame, to speak of your husband——”

“My husband!” and a bitter sadness saturated eyes and voice.

“You will want him to live in Paris also?” he asked.

“If you think it—wise,” she said with hesitation, while she tried to read his face.

She did not quite understand this rich man. His admiration was evasive. If he would only speak out! Of course he was *épris*; if he would only say so frankly and arrange with her about the best way of getting rid of the absent violinist altogether! She nibbled a rose and watched him narrowly.

“Wise?” asked Peter, and laughed; “well, I suppose that is hardly the word. It is for you to decide, Madame Bottelli. I am here to place you in a different environment. If your happiness demand that your husband be benefited also, go with you, there is nothing more to be said. I never asked you before, but—pardon me—do you love your husband?”

“No!” she said, fiercely, and snapped her fingers to typify an immeasurable scorn.

“Is he not kind to you?”

“He is—a brute!” and she found her handkerchief useful again. “Oh, do not speak of him, my friend. He shall be nothing to me—nothing—nothing—I swear it.”

Her words made Peter uncomfortable. He stood up.

“Well, we’ll say no more of him——”

“*Je le déteste!*” murmured the woman.

She flung down the rose and went nearer to him.

“You say I am beautiful?” she asked, and never looked more lovely than when she spoke, her eyes lifted languishingly.

“It was because of your beauty I was first attracted to help you. Ah, life is cruelly unfair to ugly people, madame. I dare say the destinies of women have often depended on the length of an eyelash or the play of a dimple.”

She ventured nearer.

“You will come often to Paris?”

“Why—I don’t know,” he said, vaguely.

“But you will like to see me?” she cried, in frank amaze.

“Well, I may look in to see how the new life suits you.”

“Ah, why do you not tell me—something?” she murmured, her lips pursed invitingly.

“Haven’t I told you a great deal?”

“But not that you love me. You are a strange man.”

Her words roused Peter from a sort of sleep. Surprise, weariness and distaste mingled in the sensation that rushed over him. So she had completely misunderstood him, despite his sincere, unromantic attitude! Well, no wonder. Experience was a mean-souled teacher to a poor and beautiful woman, impressing on her always one idea—that a man’s interest must first and last be a thing of sex, always for the woman and never for the human being.

She drew back, paling, before his stern glance.

“I don’t love you. You have mistaken my reasons for wishing to befriend you.”

“Oh, forgive me!” she whimpered.

“If you can imagine me in the light of a father, or a benevolent uncle, kindly do so,” he said, sharply.

Madame Bottelli followed him to the door, her lips quivering nervously.

“You will still be my friend? You

will let me live in my adored Paris?" she faltered.

"I have promised. Only be as honest with me as I am with you."

V

It was the tea hour at Mrs. Dane's. The candles were winking like stars, and their soft light, mingling with the flames' glow from the hearth and the afternoon grayness stealing between loopholes in the rose-lined curtains, produced in the nest of a room a mystical atmospheric effect eminently efficacious in bringing out the best in Mrs. Dane's carefully applied coloring.

The butler was carrying in the big silver tray laden with muffins, cups and a steaming kettle. A footman followed with the siphons and decanters. Just after them came Peter Van Vieck.

A discussion of chiffons for a month at Monte Carlo grew suddenly uninteresting to Mrs. Dane, as above the women's rose-trimmed toques she met his serene blue eyes, where the ghost of a smile hesitated. The heart under her laces was the most modish in New York, well schooled, experienced, practical, yet it gave a distinctly painful pulsation when she saw him. There was, however, no sentiment in her first remark when the other callers had departed.

"Peter, you are a good deal of a brute, do you know?" she said, in a hard little voice, as she pushed a big chair to the fender.

"What have I done now?"

"You didn't put your nose into my box last night, although I shook my fan at you."

"You looked threatening, and I'm afraid of you."

"I wish you were," she said, defiantly; "I wish you were anything but negative. Why didn't you come up to me last night?"

"That fool Lever was hanging over you."

"Well, somebody must hang, if you won't."

"Besides, I was just emerging from 'Cavalleria' and preparing for 'I Pagliacci.' I never enjoy the opera unless I can manage to forget the cable cars clanging outside and the illuminated signs advertising pickles."

"Poor Peter!" she said, in her soft voice, and she caressed him with her eyes; "you always seem to me like a child still in the first throes of its disappointment on realizing that Santa Claus is a fiction. What will you do, I wonder, when you find that no matter how much we search or experiment we never get a substitute for the old Dutch saint with his magical reindeer? Eh, what will you do?"

"What all small boys do—bury my head in somebody's lap for comfort."

His eyes were so winning, the attraction he had for her so strong she grew provoked as she pondered on his genial indifference.

"What have you been doing with yourself?" she asked, brusquely, as she shot out toward the blaze two small feet in slippers made chiefly of enormous buckles. "You've gone almost nowhere, but you occupy yourself some way, I suppose."

"I'm getting ready for another onslaught on Egypt. Do you know, we have reason to think that those last tombs, far in the interior, near——"

"Oh, yes, I know. You'll probably find a few pots and kettles, or eye teeth, or something to tell you that somebody lived there quite a while ago. Spare me details, Peter, and have another peg."

"No, but I'll smoke."

"So will I—one of yours. I adore this kind of cigarette," she said, making a grimace; "but hints are wasted on you. Do for heaven's sake send me some."

Peter looked conscience-stricken.

"Why, Hilda, I'm sorry," he stammered, flushing; "please always ask for whatever you want. You see, I'm afraid I'm something of a fool about some things. Now what else do you want besides cigarettes?"

If she only dared tell him! His big, brown hand almost touched hers on the arm of the chair. An irri-

tating desire made her advance her little finger till their two hands rested side by side. She could see that while she had an acute and painful sense of the touch he was unaware of her mute invitation.

"Oh, I want such a lot of things," she said, with a hard little laugh; "but even your philanthropy, dear old boy, couldn't help me. I've a natural perversity for wanting the jam on the top shelf quite out of reach."

He looked genuinely troubled at her words as he stood up.

"I only wish I could get that jam for you, Hilda," he said, in a soft voice but with energy and almost tragic earnestness. "See here, can I?"

She laughed and pushed him backward with one exquisite finger.

"You goose! Of course I'd tell you if there were anything you could give me," and she looked straight into his eyes, a bitter sadness in her own.

"I want you to feel that always," he said, as he pressed her hand. "What's the good of having a chum if you can't tell him everything?"

Mrs. Dane nodded her elaborately coiffed little head, gave a tinkling laugh and touched the bell.

When he was gone she remained in front of the fire, biting a corner of her handkerchief. She was going to Monte Carlo, and she had trunks full of ravishing gowns that seemed made of nothing more substantial than crystals, sea shimmerings, sunsets or filigreed snow, but all she wanted in the world was for Peter to put his arms round her and kiss her on the mouth.

VI

"I'LL conclude the whole business this morning," thought Peter on the following day, as his hansom turned into Stanton street between rows of staring children.

Madame Bottelli's words about love on the previous visit had somewhat belittled his benevolent schemes in his own mind. He was more genuinely sorry for her than ever, but one

of the barbed-wire fences that custom erects in life against trespassers had scraped him a little, and he was now really awake to the fact that even the best intentioned must beware of them or scale them gingerly.

"Poor little woman!" he was thinking; "it was most natural, after all, that she should suppose I was really thinking selfishly of her *beaux yeux*. Only certain combinations of circumstances are permissible in life; try to do a little original juggling, and the Conventional, like a stage manager, steps out from the wings and lands you one between the eyes. It will be refreshing for her to realize that a man can befriend a woman without the eternal refrain—pay, pay, pay!"

He plunged into the darkness of the ill-smelling hall, and at the top of the stairs came face to face with a portly German woman whose salient physical characteristics were a multiplicity of chins, a toothless smile and elbows smoking from hot suds.

"Ach, you come to zee Madame Bottelli—I know—yes! She get called kervick to her husband's mooter in ze hospital in a hurry, but I have a pass key and can let you in. She vill be back soon—yes."

"Thank you," said Peter, eying this new type with a passing curiosity, and trying to think why she kept her frightened gaze on him as if he were a thief; "I'll go in and write a few lines. That will be sufficient."

The room gave proof of Madame Bottelli's hurried departure. Some of her clothes lay on the sofa, among them a wrapper with the sleeves flung up, giving it the look of an inert and anguished body. The uninterrupted sunlight poured in on the remnants of a hasty breakfast and a fireless stove.

The place was so rankly ugly and stale that Peter felt his gorge rise. He flung down his hat, cane and gloves, and went to a table where an ink bottle stood. When he sat down and drew some paper toward him his arm pushed aside a blotter, and under it he saw a partially written letter. His own name flared up at him from the

mass of French words, and then a phrase caught his eye that made him gasp. After that he leaned on his elbow and read it all:

MY ADORED, MY OWN, MY SWEET VINCENZO:

Ah, how your last letter has troubled me! Your words like fire wrap my heart—I feel as if burning needles pricked my flesh. Oh, you are cruel! Oh, how I suffer! Could you believe that your Valérie would ever take back from her Vincenzo the heart once given? Adored one, behold me on my knees to you.

All that I have said is true.

I love you—you only—you forever.

Listen now, my Vincenzo, desire of my life, heart of me—listen. I did believe that Monsieur Van Vieck was enamored of me, and for the sake of the money I meant to play with him a little, then I meant to use the money in the dear Paris or in your own Genoa—but with you, *amico*, always with you, and snap my fingers at him with a la-la-la! As my patron saint hears me I am not deceiving you.

But, peerless one, I was mistaken, and here is now more truth—the poor gentleman is quite crazy. He is rich, rich, rich—but he is mad. He wants to pour his gold into your Valérie's hand *for no reason whatever*, my own *precioso*. Ah, it was pitiful the other day to see his rage when I ventured to speak of love—just to sound him, *cara mia*. His eyes flashed with anger, and he denounced me. Poor young man, he does not look mad, either—quite gentle and with such a sweet smile. But would I have my Vincenzo so, even with all his money? No, my angel, no!

The letter ended here. Peter sat for a moment, his elbows squared, his hands in his pockets, then he flung back his head, a howl of laughter not heard from his lips since college days shattering the silence. Again and again the roar came, while the breakfast dishes tinkled from the vibrations and the limp wrapper slipped from the sofa to the floor as if crushed into humiliation by the ironic merriment.

"Gott!" exclaimed the German woman, sticking her head in and withdrawing it rapidly, her fat face pasty white.

"Oh, now I know why she looked

scared," said Peter aloud, kicking in ecstasy; "she was told I was crazy. Oh, Lord! oh, Lord!"

When calmness came he dried his eyes and sat in thought. His transplantation scheme, of course, was dead, yet the miserable room still touched him to pity. He nodded slowly as he folded the letter and put it into his pocket. After a little more thought he wrote the following:

I have found the letter to your husband and I am taking it away as a souvenir of my acquaintance with you, but I am paying for it. You will not object when I leave you a cheque for a thousand dollars. It is worth that much to me. Adieu, madame.

VII

THREE years spent almost entirely in Egypt left Peter browner, thinner and with a look of unchanging weariness where of old the dreaming had been.

He was in Paris, the May sunshine glinting in his eyes, the softness of the May breezes in his face. He was just thirty-six, with as many millions as his years; he was free, and in Paris at the floodtide of its loveliest season. These things would make for happiness with most men, but not with Peter. Why not?

He rose abruptly from the café table, stooped to pass under the fluttering awning and joined the Boulevard promenaders.

"Why not? why not?" So the omnibuses rolling on to the Madeleine seemed to drone, as he made his lonely way among the crowd.

He need not have been alone. There were plenty of his friends in Paris. He might at that moment have been taking tea in the Rue de Lille with a little marquise. But distaste of everything had him in its grip. His soul seemed to be drenched in an acid that bit out color and fibre.

He turned into the Rue d'Eschelle, his mental vision directed inward to his own pointless craving, when he heard a voice call his name in ringing accents of delight and amazement.

He wheeled round. A woman was standing on the stone step outside a shop door. Her hand was extended in greeting. She was a very fat brunette, with pretty, dark eyes and a mottled skin. She was white-aproned, and rolls of protecting white paper extended above her elbows. In the window of the shop behind her there were cheeses, jellied meats, cold joints. "*Charcuterie*" flamed in gilt on the glass, and under it "Bottelli."

There was no discrediting his eyes. The woman was Madame Bottelli—with additions. The pensive discontent that had once made her eyes so lovely was replaced by an aggressive good-humor and businesslike alertness of glance; the eyes were smaller, too, pushed up by the layers of flesh under them. Once she had stirred Peter's soul by suggesting the anguish of unrest, of unsatisfied longings; now she suggested the complacency of large profits, with a substantial dinner in the near future.

Her delight was so excessive that her fat, crimson cheeks quivered like one of the jellies in the window, and she caught Peter's coat sleeve.

"Come, my benefactor—come and meet my husband."

He found himself in the shop—cheeses under glass in front of him, dried shallots hanging on strings behind him, Madame Bottelli jabbering broken exclamations of delight in front of him as she yelled for Vincenzo and at the same time commenced to slice *jambon* thinly for a customer who had entered, wielding the long, razor-like knife with a rapid dexterity that dazed Peter.

"It is he!" she cried to the black-haired little man, fantastically arrayed, who rushed out; "it is the generous American who made us rich. Salute him, Vincenzo. But for him and me—ah, where would you be now?"

It was easy to see that Madame Bottelli was the ruling spirit. Vincenzo gave her a cringing glance, and his hand felt greasy to Peter's palm.

"Madame has told me," he quav-

ered. "Ah, it was magnificent! *Dio*, how gladly I laid aside the miserable violin for—this. Ah, what a fortune that excellent woman received from you!"

Peter's eyes grew curious.

"But I gave no fortune."

"Five thousand francs!" shrieked Madame Bottelli. "So modestly, too! Ah, that poor letter—and you did not hate me for speaking the truth? No? You said I should have Paris as I dreamed of it——"

"And this is—your dream?" asked Peter, slowly, looking round.

"Yes; is it not fine? The business is mine. Ah, Vincenzo could be much of a fool," she said, confidentially, "but he knows I would turn him out—pif!—into the street." She leaned restfully on the handle of a big carving knife, and continued: "I knew that to sell what must be eaten pays. Ah, *mon Dieu!* we all have to think of the appetite—*n'est-ce pas?* Look, too," she added, with a proprietary flourish, as Vincenzo, who had darted into the back room, reappeared with a big-faced baby; "behold my cherub, monsieur. He came after the shop began to pay."

Peter made several abortive attempts to leave, but the farewells were so extended, the pair so servile in their gratitude, it seemed an eternity before he found himself in the street. His hand seemed to reek of grease.

He knew now that he had once manufactured desires for Madame Bottelli out of his own tastes and needs, and had found them materialized for her in cheeses, mounds of cold meats and pats of butter. Besides, her worst characteristics had been strengthened by the possession of money, and one more tyrant had been added to the world. His expression was chastened.

"Death of another fantasy," thought Peter, as he took himself and his weariness to his hotel. Then with the finality born of disgust he put from him all willing memory of the Bottelli experiment.

The next morning, as in the same

aimless mood he dressed for the day's dreariness, a note was brought to him.

I heard you were at the Bristol. I have a little apartment on the Parc Monceau. I give tea and talk to those I like at four o'clock. Will you come to-day? Do you know it is almost three years since I've seen you? Lucette takes this, and will wait for your answer.

HILDA.

As he looked at the big, crooked letters a warmth stole sluggishly through him, and the crust of his boredom was broken by a widening seam. He had not been aware of it before, but he knew now that Hilda Dane was the only creature in whose company he could feel really glad to be. He was never bored with her. Perhaps he had even missed her. Paris made piquant by verbal fisticuffs with her, made warm by her sympathy, but thinly veiled by a habit of laughing mockery—and Paris without her were two different places.

He sent off an answer, settled down with his secretary to a morning of business correspondence to agents and lawyers in America until the midday *déjeuner*, then with a cigar went into the May sun.

Yesterday he had walked without aim or destination. To-day there was a pleasant definiteness in his movements, and when he analyzed his emotions he found he was living in the expectancy of four o'clock at Mrs. Dane's.

When he passed the Madeleine the flowers massed in the market there sent him a message, though yesterday they had had none for him. They suggested that the little apartment on the Parc Monceau might look well made radiant by their beauty, and that the mistress of it might be a degree more perfect against the background of blossoms. He bought out three voluble venders, and despatched them with the violets, marigolds and narcissus.

It was half-past two when he strolled into the Rue de la Paix; it was five minutes later when he felt

himself prodded in the shoulder with something sharp, and heard a voice say:

"Peter!"

There was Mrs. Dane waving the attacking parasol at him and just stepping into a victoria.

"This *is* luck," he said, boyish delight brightening his worn face.

"Do you think so, Peter? How you have shied at your luck, then, for three years!" she said, with the defiant little laugh he remembered.

"Jump in."

Had she followed her crude, natural impulse, there in the Rue de la Paix, in the sight of all men, she would have wept for joy, hugged him, and boxed his ears. Why did he have ideals? Or if he must have them, why was she too faulty to be one of them?

"Where shall we go?" she asked.

"To the Bois?"

"Too early, you savage. Let's go where it's shady and have a drink."

"Feed me with rickies, comfort me with Scotches and sodas, for I am sick at heart," paraphrased Peter, and they drove to the Bodega.

"How do I look?" asked Hilda, as they seated themselves in a remote corner.

"Still fresh and pretty as ever."

"Still fresh! Oh, for heaven's sake please never say that again. It's as awful as 'well preserved.' You know my age, Peter, alas!" Then she laughed in his face. "But I dare you, I double-dare you to remember it. You see I wear white now, from crown to toe—so girlish, you know. But one thing I promise you—I shall never adopt the ingénue manner. But I haven't told you how you look."

"Revenge yourself by calling me fresh."

"You look," she said, seriously, "as if you'd done with everything."

"No, everything has done me."

"You look like a smoked herring with sad eyes."

"Is that the best you can do for me? You won't make me vain, at any rate. Here comes our man. Now

see if I don't remember how to make a peg to your liking."

As the soda rushed from the siphon Mrs. Dane sat strangely quiet and watched him. How well those pretty, worldly eyes read all the marks written on his fine face!

"Well?" asked Peter, as he sat back; "your gaze is an inquisition."

"What a map the face can be when one doesn't employ a *masseur*," she said, thoughtfully, leaning on her elbow.

"Meaning me?"

"Yes. What's come to you? What's marked you as a disappointed man?"

"My dear Hilda, to tell you all would bore you. Let me summarize. I've found there are few things men and women will not sell for money. I put my trust in men concerned in this Egyptian business, actuated by the frenzy of the explorer, by the longing to discover something that would benefit the world. Well, they fooled me. I was a good thing. They drained me of what money they could and hoaxed me. I have misunderstood almost everyone I've tried to help; all have laughed at me behind their hands. My dreams for them have proved only dreams. By nature I am an image maker. I've worshiped beauty in life with a pagan intensity, and now my very marrow seems atrophied with disillusion." His smile was almost a contradiction to his weary words, but he nodded, and added: "It is true."

Mrs. Dane leaned nearer, her cheeks a deepening pink under her white veil.

"You have been too good," she said, emphatically; "that's the trouble. Continue to relieve distress, since you are rich and suffering hurts you, but don't idealize the sufferers. Don't expect too much of our miserable human nature, my dear Peter. It can't live up to your ideal of it."

"I hope you don't think me a prig."

"Not at all. You are unique. The simple, unconscious goodness of a pure boy has grown up with you, that's all."

"Well, Hilda," he said, in a new, definite tone, "you've often told me to fling my dreams overboard and be normal. Is that your counsel still?"

"Yes. You're hardly human, you're so good," she said, wrinkling her little nose in mockery.

"Here then, over our pegs, I make my confession. I find that when all's said and done the best thing the world affords is the companionship of a pretty, bright woman who understands life and accepts it with the shrug of a philosopher."

"Good. You are tacking all right now."

"Am I? Then I'll keep on," and a tenderness came into his eyes which made her heart beat faster. "Will you have me, Hilda?"

"Have you?"

"Marry me—for I love you! Will you?"

Her lashes flickered. When she looked at him fully all her love and a mist were in her eyes.

"I've waited for those words for six years. Six years wasted! Six years we can never have back!" Then her laughter came again. "I'd like to beat you."

"Dear Hilda," said Peter, managing to fold a finger round hers, "I'm a dull pupil. It took me all this time to find out that instead of needing all the phantoms I was pursuing I needed only you. Shall we go?"

"Home?"

That slow word in her soft voice suggested heaven to his weary spirit. But he smiled and shook his head.

"Afterward, dear. But first to the Rue de la Paix. I saw a string of pearls there the other day that might have tempted a more exacting creature than simple little *Marguerite*. They'll look so well with these pure white gowns of yours."

But Hilda did not wait for him to finish. She sprang up, her eyes glowing, and as they were now alone in the place she put her hand on his shoulder.

"Peter, you angel! *How* you are improving!"

A CASE OF MALARIA

By Frederick Chester

“AND yet,” said Mrs. Bobby, “you’ve never married.”
I admitted it.

“In spite of them all,” pursued Mrs. Bobby, vaguely.

“Precisely,” said I, “in spite of—of them all,” and I sighed.

“Now I wonder why not,” said Bobby, who has an investigating habit of mind and takes some pride in it.

“Ask *them*,” submitted Mrs. Bobby.

I shook my head. Mrs. Bobby looked interested.

“Why, then,” said she, watching my face, “why, then, ask—ask *her*.”

“Ah,” said I.

“But I say,” cried Bobby, dragging his chair a bit nearer, “I say, you haven’t the cheek to sit there and deny that you’ve wanted to marry a lot of girls?”

“Oh, yes, I’ve just that much cheek,” said I, pleasantly.

Good old Bobby stared. “You’ve never loved but one girl?” he said, in an awed whisper; “you’ve never been in love but once? You’re mad!”

“Oh, I’ve been in love a thousand times,” said I, “yet I never loved but one—person.”

“Well, I’m dashed if I see the distinction,” growled Bobby.

“You’ve been in love a thousand times,” suggested Mrs. Bobby, looking more interested, “but not quite——”

“Precisely,” said I, “not quite——” and I turned my eyes to her face. She looked away.

“Well, why in—why didn’t you marry her?” demanded Bobby, impatiently.

“Ask her,” said I.

“Hasn’t she married anyone?”

“Oh, yes,” said I; “she’s married a better man.”

“You’re growing deuced modest,” said Bobby, unkindly.

I felt hurt. “I said a better man,” I continued, with some heat; “not a handsomer one or a more interesting one or a more congenial one. As a matter of fact, I think she’d have had a jollier time if she had married me. The man she married is growing fat and—and settled. He rows when his dinner doesn’t go quite right.”

Bobby passed a reflective hand over his waistcoat. Bobby is growing a bit—the least bit in the world—settled. And he loves his dinner, and his waist—but that’s his tailor’s affair.

“Was it,” ventured Mrs. Bobby, gently, “was it all a long time ago?”

“Yes,” said I, “a long time ago—ages ago, when we—when I was younger.”

“And more foolish?”

“No.”

“But men,” pursued Mrs. Bobby, “forget so quickly. It’s the woman who remembers.”

“Ah!” said I, looking again into Mrs. Bobby’s eyes. And again she looked away.

“What was she like?” demanded Bobby, smoothing his waistcoat.

I was conscious of a subdued excitement on the part of his helpmeet, a violent attempt to catch my eye, which was coldly withheld.

“She was tall,” said I, squinting along my stick, “quite tall, and she deserved that badly overworked ad-

jective 'willowy,' for she was singularly lithe—er—bendable, you know. How in the world she managed it in those horrible stiff bone contrap—"

But just here Mrs. Bobby was seized with a most curious and violent attack of coughing that lasted till I'd quite forgotten where I was.

"Go on, go on!" said Bobby, when she had finished.

"Let me see," said I; "where was I? Oh, yes, I don't see how she managed it with those stiff—"

"What was her hair like?" demanded Mrs. Bobby, rudely interrupting.

"Her hair?" said I, "why—er—brown, I think; yes, brown, but a curious sort of brown, you know. In the sunlight it was the reddest copper, a perfect halo; I used to—"

"Ah, now I prefer gold, you know," said Bobby; "Carol's is gold in the sun, isn't it, Carol?" and he gave an idiotic smirk at Mrs. Bobby.

"Gold?" said I, "nonsense. Copper! Didn't I say copper?" Then all at once I recollected myself, and began to go very red.

"Yes, but who the—what the—what has that got to do—" cried Bobby, in puzzled amazement.

"Ah, isn't it nice?" said Mrs. Bobby, very quickly. "Jerry thinks my hair is like hers. That's a pretty speech, Jerry," and I began to breathe again.

"And her eyes," I went on at once, before Bobby could ask any more embarrassing questions, "her eyes were gray, not brown-gray, you know, but dark slate-gray, just on the edge of blue—I've seen the sea that color on a dark day."

"On a dark day?" mused Carolyn.

"Yes," said I, "I was thinking of one dark day a very long time ago, a dark day at sea, you know, when she and I were out in a catboat on Long Island Sound and got caught in a squall, and thought we should never get in. She was—she was rather fine that day."

"Wasn't she frightened?" inquired Bobby, hunting for a cigarette.

"Frightened?" said I, "frightened?

rather not! She wasn't that sort. She came back to where I was sitting braced against the tiller, and put her hands on my shoulders and looked me in the eyes, and said—said some rather nice things. Then she sat down very quietly and waited for what we thought was coming. We got in safely, though, at last," and I sighed.

"What did she say?" asked Bobby, athirst for particulars.

"Oh, as for that," said I, "it was a long time ago."

"You've forgotten?" inquired Mrs. Bobby.

"No," said I, "oh, no; that is, not quite. I dare say I shall in time."

"Ah!" said Carolyn.

"She probably didn't mean it, you see," I explained.

"Because she married the—the better man?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps she meant it—at the time," said Carolyn.

"But," said I, "she married the other man."

"Possibly she means it still," insisted Mrs. Bobby.

"If she claimed to love you and then married another man," said Bobby, oracularly, "you're jolly well rid of her. You're not to be pitied—it's the other man."

"Oh," said I, "the other man! I've often wondered about him. No, on the whole, I envy the better man."

"Don't," said Mrs. Bobby. "What if she still means—means what she said in the catboat? Just—just a little, that is; thinks of it sometimes, wonders if—oh, wonders about it."

"That," said I, "is not probable. She has far too much good sense. I should be sorry to believe that of her."

"Would you?" asked Mrs. Bobby, rather thoughtfully.

"Yes," said I, firmly, and began to put on a glove.

"Well," said Bobby, "all I have to say is, I'm jolly glad I'm not the other man. Have one of these cigarettes?"

"No, thank you," said I. "I must be going on—and, by the way, I may not see you again soon. I'm thinking of going abroad in a few days. I may be gone some time."

"Clothes?" inquired Bobby, interestedly.

"Well, no, we'll call it health. I have a return of—er—an old malady now and then. I'm generally a bit better on the other side."

"Heart disease?" suggested Bobby, wittily.

"Malaria," said I, looking at Carolyn; "it's a stubborn disease, devilish stubborn! It gives you no rest."

"Before you go," said Bobby, "I want to show you that cup I was speaking of. I'm a bit proud of it. It was a near shave, you know. Carol, where the deuce is that cup, do you know?"

"It might be on the chimney mantel in your dressing-room," said Mrs. Bobby. "I saw it there once—but I happen to know it isn't there now," she continued, not too loudly, as Bobby left the room.

"Is it then so—so *very* troublesome?" she asked, gently, leaning forward a little in her chair, "the—malaria, you know."

I drew things on the floor with my stick.

"Oh, not so very," said I, cheerfully; "it's intermittent, in a way. I shall get over it. It's an old malady, you know."

"Oh," said Carolyn, rather coldly. "I see I was wasting my—my——"

"What?" said I, looking up from my pictures.

"Sympathy," said Mrs. Bobby. "And if you feel so cheerful about it, why run away to Europe for a cure? You seem in a fair way toward health here."

"But it's intermittent," said I. "It comes on when I'm a bit fagged or down on my luck or blue, and then it's—it's rather troublesome."

"And gives you no rest?" murmured Carolyn.

"And gives me no rest. I wonder," said I, "I wonder if she meant what she said in the catboat."

"I should think she probably meant it," said Carolyn. It seemed to me that her voice was a bit tired—or something.

"Why, then," said I, "it's a curious jumble—all through. I can't see any fun in it at all."

"There's never been any fun in it," said Carolyn, looking away.

"I wonder, too," I went on, "why she married the better man."

"I wonder," said Carolyn.

"But she did," said I, "and that ends it, doesn't it? For she's a good woman. God never made a truer, I think. If I didn't know that, I shouldn't be suffering from—an old malady."

"I suppose," said Carolyn, watching the pictures I drew on the rug, "I suppose she'd be rather happy if she could hear you say that. Everyone," she went on, hastily, "everyone likes to be thought well of, you know, by—by anybody."

"Yes," said I.

"Why don't you," said Carolyn, bending lower, "why don't you marry some one of the others? It would be a surer cure than traveling." There was little enthusiasm in her tone.

"Ah," said I, "I've thought of that."

Carolyn looked up very swiftly. Her eyes were wide, and I've seen the sea that color—on a dark day.

"But the notion doesn't seem to fill me, as it should, with joy. I can't seem to believe that I should improve things much."

Mrs. Bobby caught a hand to her heart and drew a very long breath. I don't know what the breath meant. I think it wasn't disappointment or—or anything like that.

"And besides," said I, "a man with an incur—with an ancient malady has no right to marry."

"Not even if marrying might cure the malady?"

"He has no right to take risks," said I, firmly. "Ah, no, I and my illness must go it alone, Carol."

"Until the illness is cured," murmured Carolyn.

"Why, as to that—" said I, "ah,

well, then, yes, till the illness is cured."

Mrs. Bobby rose uncertainly and went over to the window, and stood there with her face pressed against the glass, looking out into the street where the dusk was glooming.

"Would you—would you have it cured?" she asked, presently. I could barely hear the voice.

"Why, now," I cried, with a rueful little laugh, "why, now you've hit on the curious part of it all! On my soul, I believe I shouldn't. I believe I'd be lost without it. I'm hugging my ill as a man hugs his dearest sin. No, I shouldn't want it cured—quite."

"Not—quite!" said Mrs. Bobby from the window.

A street lamp outside burst suddenly into light and threw a golden glow across one side of her face, cheek and lips and chin and little high nose. I looked away.

Then Bobby burst into the room, falling over a rug on his way.

"Can't find that beast of a cup anywhere!" he cried. "I believe Carol's pawned it. Carol doesn't care for yachting, anyhow; says she was frightened in a blow once when she was a kid— Why the—why in thunder don't you have the lights brought, Carol? It's dark as a closet here. Well, good-bye, old chap. Remember me to the crowd in Paris; I may get over in the Spring. Have a good time, and forget all that sentimental rot of yours. You aren't the one to howl, anyway. As I told you, the other man's the unlucky one. Good-bye—"

Mrs. Bobby followed me out to the door, which was shocking bad form.

"Will you—really—go abroad?" she asked.

I placed my hand on the knob.

"Out of danger—yes," said I. "It is—malarial here. I don't like to run away, but discretion's the better part of something—I forget what."

"Discretion used not to be in your line, Jerry," said she.

I turned the knob, experimentally.

"No," I said, "perhaps not, but I'm older now. I'm finding it out every day. I've a few gray hairs. I've rheumatism sometimes—"

"And—and malaria?" said Carol, holding the doorknob.

"Alas, yes," said I, sadly; "rheumatism sometimes, but malaria—always."

"You said," whispered Mrs. Bobby, "you said it was intermittent."

"I lied," said I. "Let me open the door, Carol."

"You said it could be cured."

"I lied again. God knows it's for life till death! Let me open the door."

"Then you're going—abroad, Jerry?"

"Yes," said I. "Oh, don't you see that I must go?"

She took her hand from the doorknob.

"Yes, Jerry," she said, after a little, and sighed. "Yes, I suppose you must go. Well, then, good-bye, ah, good-bye!" And she put out her hand to me. It trembled a little. "Why!" she cried, "I must be cold! See, my hand is shivering!" and she gave a little strained laugh.

"It is the draught from the door," said I. "You are growing colder, and—and I, too."

"It is—malarial—here," said Mrs. Bobby, very low.

"Good-bye, Carol," said I, and I closed the door between us.



LOCATING THE HONOR

SHE haughtily declined the cigarette he proffered her.

"My goodness!" he exclaimed.

"Pardon me, mine!" she protested.

L'AMÉRICAINNE

By Mrs. Sherwood

FRANCE has taken *l'Américaine* seriously. She did not ask to be taken thus. With youth, audacity, vitality, an entire absence of any accountability to anybody, beautiful, rich, and married to a millionaire or a duke, the companion of princesses, the beloved of kings—such a creature does not ask to be forgiven, to be described, to be catalogued, to be put in a thousand *feuilletons*.

Youth with her is a disease. It is her measles or scarlet fever, except that it is not painful and she is not "having it hard." She will recover. She is having it, so far as she knows, "mighty easy," and Paris is her Land of the Lotus. The French are fond of saying, and perhaps truly, that an American is more of a woman in Paris than at home. She is the eternal feminine. She is a new delight. She reads adoration in every man's eyes—that silent, fervent worship that the American man is too proud, too reticent, too busy or too indifferent to show in public. She is blossoming under new conditions very favorable to her pleasure and her looks. It must be admitted that a great many very attractive and clever Americans have shocked Europe for many years by a certain disregard of appearances and an abruptness of speech and manner that the women of other nations do not permit themselves. The well-bred slip along not caring at all to be known beyond the respectable precincts that they mark out for themselves, and that Europeans are only too glad to yield to them. Duchesses in England, princesses in

Italy, countesses in France, ambassadors everywhere—these ladies have no stories to tell of impolite criticism, because they are like well-bred women everywhere. They, however, have no attraction for the romance writer. He must have an eccentric or somebody who is to him out of the common. He finds her in the Rue de la Paix and on the Champs Élysées, delightful, pretty, fresh and totally regardless of him and everybody else.

She astonishes even her own countrymen. Many a minister to France in the old time has begged and besought some giddy girl to behave better in the streets lest she be mistaken for a class to which she does not belong; but he has not always been heeded.

A great deal of this manner dates from the nursery. There used to be a story many centuries ago of a Senator from some far-off State who wished to get a Boston governess for his daughter Olivia, who was impossible. Miss Oldfield arrived—a rather prim person whose manner and style pleased neither Mrs. Senator nor Livvey. There was stern repression on her mouth and conscientious reproof in her eye as she looked at the lady's gorgeous gown. The Senator was a cipher in his own house, and after meekly observing that he wished Miss Oldfield "to be treated like a lady," he retreated to the councils of the nation, where he was somebody. Miss Oldfield was shocked by the ignorance and the impudence of Livvey, and after trying her on geography and history she asked: "What are the products

of your State?" "Alfalfa and Presidents. We are trying both; sometimes we fail in our crops. Pa was a failure from our State. He tried to be President, but he slipped up. Ma has slipped up, too; she wants to become a leader in dress, but she can't. She bought thirty-two gowns at once, but they don't any of 'em fit, and she has to slip up, too." "Child! child!" said Miss Oldfield, "are you speaking of your father and mother?" She seized her gripsack and descended to the library, where, telling her story, she was received by Mr. and Mrs. Senator with shouts of laughter. "Smart girl, Livvey!" said the proud father. "I guess I sha'n't slip up next time, though." "You do not understand my daughter," said Mrs. Senator. "Olivia, you shall have Miss Cambridge, whom you liked at York; that girl with the Madonna face." "Yes," said Olivia, "I liked her; she was so pretty! I guess she'd make something of me." Shocked and terrified, disgusted and sad, the governess "made tracks," as Miss Olivia expressed it, and left for Boston by the next train. Miss Olivia got the Madonna-faced governess, and either through that lady's wiser ministrations or through her own beauty and cleverness she became a sensation in Paris. That very much reverence enters into her being for pa or for ma is not to be expected, but she is pretty and breaks hearts and defies the *convenances* with admirable insouciance, and will doubtless marry a duke if she does not enter a Royal family, for the Senator is one of the Steel Trust. She is *l'Américaine* of the latest French novel.

The French romance writer is a very piquant man. He can say a great many clever things to the square inch. But he skips large tracts of American women as he skips his own most excellent and useful French women. He has, perhaps, the most useful and faithful of wives, to whom he never alludes in his novels, except, perhaps, rather scornfully, as "*ma légitime*." His heroine is a coquette,

and though very pleasing, not particularly honest. In dealing with *l'Américaine* he does not describe the large American class who are as dignified as duchesses, as proper as the Puritan mother, as virtuous as the Roman matron of Cæsar's day; he knows she is there, filling the rôle of duchess, countess, princess, with great success; she is ambassadress, distinguished *citoyenne*, visitor of great consequence, making the fortunes of Félix, Worth and Doucet, patronizing schools and music teachers. He knows of her, but she is not necessary to his pages. You do not find her in the modern French romance.

But he can be intensely descriptive in five thousand *feuilletons* on the subject of *l'Américaine*. He says of one of his heroes: "Columbus discovered America before the count was born, but *l'Américaine* was not discovered until long after. Therefore he had not learned of her at school or from books; it was to be his proud privilege and pleasure to find her out for himself."

As a man goes to Borneo to find a new orchid, the modern French count walks down the Rue de la Paix to discover *l'Américaine*. It is doubtful which enjoys this proceeding more, the man or the woman. He is lured on by a perfect figure rather too well dressed for the street, with a waist too small, a fresh, pink cheek painted by nature, curling, ample blond hair, the jauntiest of little feet and heavenly blue eyes. She notices him, stops and looks in at a shop window; he overtakes her; she crosses the street; he crosses; they repeat this performance several times; they exchange glances; she grows prettier for several blocks; at last, at a shop window, she drops her handkerchief; he picks it up and hands it to her; she gives him a steel-like thrust out of her blue eyes, that blaze with a fierce virtue; he is rebuffed and alarmed, and retreats; she walks away, delighted that she has conquered the dangerous animal—man.

Yet she has shown herself dis-

tinctly feminine; she is willing to allure; she does not mean to surrender. This pretty creature is entirely new to the French count. He thinks he has never seen a blonde before. She has given him a new sensation, walking alone in the streets of Paris, alluring a man to follow her. She is evidently very strongly fortified in her own self-esteem. She disappears into a friend's house just as he believes he is on the point of finding out who she is.

They meet frequently at restaurants, at operas, at concerts; he follows her in the street, and at last, at the house of a mutual friend, he meets her and is presented. She is the daughter of one of the oldest New York families, "a Colonial Dame"—much is made of this title—and she is the wife of a New York millionaire who is very fond of her. Her husband, who is at home studying toxicology, is perfectly calm and full of confidence in his pretty wife, who is *veuve par grâce*—that is, widow by permission; and the author takes pains to explain the miserable vulgarity of our mistaken expression, "grass widow," and our ignorant and wholly meaningless translation, which is in this case the traducing of the term "*veuve par grâce*." Who translates, traduces.

Then the heroine of the novel has the pleasure of falling in love, playing with fire, and going home to her generous American husband loving him better than all the French counts—this is the end of the good French novel. There are others that end differently, but the French romance writer has had a literary opportunity of the rarest. He luxuriates in the fresh, unspoiled beauty of a new race—a race which, he claims, will produce a *third* sex, one that shall have the female doctor, the philosopher Tennyson's violet-hooded doctor, in a new square cap or a picture hat; who, while she gravely pursues her learned Abelard studies, exclaims in every glance of her bright eyes that she will

An angel appear to all others beside,
But still be a woman to you!

It is of the young American women who, their own countrymen declare, are "absolutely spoiled by too much liberty and too much happiness," that the Frenchman attempts to write. He finds them, as they are, too egotistical, too independent; they have no devotion to men, no self-abnegation, in his eyes. It is not alone their desire to vote that shocks him; it is their contempt for all things, beginning with man, whom "she does not love enough." He objects to her trading on the generosity of the American man; he calls it a *vengeance mesquine* that she takes of his goodness. Again, he can never get over her shocking disregard of the *convenances*, her forgetfulness of that panoply of virtue which the convent-bred woman carries about with her, and which is highly needful in a country where virtue requires safeguards. He cannot imagine that air of crystalline purity in which once the American girl was reared, or that immense safety which consists in being trusted. His civilization is too old and too corrupt to do without these outer guards. He has known, read of and studied only such women as his own convent-bred French or Italian specimens.

Marion Crawford has written a novel called "Tarquisara," in which he pictures the young heroine, an Italian princess, a woman of immense fortune who never knows any freedom, never even knows what men have sued for her hand. She is, to be sure, the victim of wicked relatives who wish to get her fortune, but she has to leave Naples and retreat to a mountain fastness that she owns, with her maid and an old priest for her companions, even to guess at the privilege of freedom; and there, too, when, against all the prejudices of society, she dares to write the sad cripple who is suing for her hand to visit her, with his father and mother, she incurs reproach. She is a splendid character, and the situation is romantic in the extreme.

But what a contrast to the entire absence of surveillance that exists in

the life of the average American girl! Which is better for the development of the "eternal feminine?" Which tells for happiness? Is the *juste milieu* so hard to find? Certainly no one envies the sad fate of Crawford's heroine, his imprisoned Italian woman, *Veronica Serra*, who is doubtless a faithful picture of the convent-bred, well-born Italian maid, deprived of all the natural happiness of a virtuous love, of a knowledge of her own heart. Yet what parent can look without trembling on the reverse of the picture as he opens a French novel and studies the anatomical analysis of *l'Américaine*? He wonders if the clever young girl who criticises the Frenchman of this epoch knows what she is talking about, or if she does not know rather too much. "Yes, Frenchmen are droll," she says; "they are interesting. Their mustaches belong to another age, however, the *moyen âge*, the sixteenth century. They are royalists, these mustaches; imperialists, heroic, spiritual, like St. Louis's. They are the most beautiful mustaches in the world, but they do not go well with the modern costume; no, not at all. The French have such poor tailors, and are not well dressed; their coats seem not to have been made for them. Now, the armor of Richard Cœur de Lion fitted his mustache so much better!"

"The Republic has made the discord, doubtless," suggests a married friend. And then a young patriot comes to the rescue and talks of the exquisitely refined conversation of the Frenchmen of science, the astronomers, the *littérateurs*, "*habillés par un mauvais faiseur et cravatés à la diable*."

"There is nothing left to the young Frenchman of the best class but his mustache," insists *l'Américaine*, *avec son insouciance brutale*.

This conversation is overheard by a certain gentleman of the old school, a true gentleman, a grand seigneur. No wonder he thinks these Americans have been very badly brought up. In fact, they have never, in his

way of looking at it, been brought up at all. The young girl, *l'Américaine*, has been allowed to come up with no restraint, not even that of a good heart. She will talk loudly in a restaurant, saying, "If they understand English that is not my fault; they ought not to listen." Certainly good manners are the shadows of good virtues, and if the Americans have not good manners they must submit to the supposition of foreigners that they are without the virtues. It must be conceded, however, that the French novelist approaches his subject as if he loved it. There is almost an enamored fervor in the portrait drawing. As Du Maurier seemed inspired by an early passion when he attempted "*Trilby*"—and one knew that he had knelt at those feet—so of the Frenchman who describes his heroine: "Her brilliant mind inspired her to study, but she soon concluded that it was better to be *une femme qu'une féministe*. So she gave up the profession of being a doctor. She concluded to stay a woman. Her beauty saved her." Now note his description of a belle: "*Une belle est une de ces créatures, brillantes, polies, possédant le secret pouvoir qui fait les conquérants; c'est à elle qui vont tous les hommages; en la couvrir de fleurs, on mendie ses sourires*."

Can anything be prettier than that? And *l'Américaine* to this gallant Frenchman is not alone an

Idalian Aphrodite, beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new bathed in Paphian wells,

but she is clever. She has what he has. She has *esprit*. He recognizes his intellectual sister. He knows that she is

Fearing in desire
To follow knowledge, like a shooting star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

Thus it is true that the Frenchman sees much to respect as well as to laugh at in *l'Américaine*. How different is his portraiture to that of

the Englishman who gives a somewhat brutal prod to Miss Chicago and to Miss New York! It must be remembered that the Frenchman is not born tender and gentle. Before all things he is a critic. Therefore he must be excused if he is before all things critical; and again, he is a Latin, and it was never a characteristic of that race to reverence women. We need go back only to Cæsar and Cicero to learn that the Latin undervalued them.

So, looking at the Frenchman's estimate of *l'Américaine*, we can only be glad that it is no worse. We could not expect a "tender-hearted scroll of pure adoration," from such a man of such a race, concerning such women as he sees in Paris. His description must be deeply tinctured with sarcasm, with misunderstanding. Who, indeed, wholly understands a woman? At any rate, who but an American can do *l'Américaine* justice?



OH, REBEL HEART!

OH, rebel heart, that ever through the day
The length of toil, the little time of play,
Whispers one name as bird imprisoned sings
The lost delight of unforgotten Springs,
The green of April and the gold of May!

No mandate of mine own will it obey;
Fearless it yields through frowns and threatenings
To its one king the things that are the king's,
Oh, rebel heart!

No more my feet the olden path dare stray;
Mine eyes may not look back upon the way;
My mouth no more the name forbidden brings.
Why only should my heart of all these things
Laugh at my ruling and defy my sway,
Oh, rebel heart!

McCREA PICKERING.



QUIDDITIES

MANY are called on, but few are at home.
It is hard to say which is the more difficult—living down a past or living up to a future.

There is nothing more tragic than unrequited love—unless it be love that is requited.

We are judged by our failures, loved for our faults and hated for our virtues.

BEATRICE STURGES.

THE FOOLISH MAID

AH, Fate! what cruel jest didst thou employ,
 That I, whose heart was so unwise a thing,
 Whose life ran o'er with bliss or sorrowing,
 Have now nor power to suffer nor enjoy?
 I did not know too many gifts destroy
 Love's gratefulness, and I was wont to bring
 Unto his feet my heart's whole offering
 That he might make my happiness his toy.
 But when he found that he could make me glad
 Or fearful with a single little word,
 And knew what boundless mastery he had,
 He wearied of submission, and averred
 The days were too monotonous to bear—
 And then he went away—I know not where!

CHARLOTTE BECKER.



QUIRKS AND QUIBBLES

IT is easy for the light-headed to be light-hearted.
 He who confesses that he lies, lies; he who denies that he lies, lies twice.

We admire the man who will listen to reason because he gives us a chance to talk.

Most of us know only one man whom we regard as absolutely fair and unbiassed, and modesty prevents us from naming him.

Let a man imagine he is having his own way and a woman can do anything with him; let a woman but suspect she is having her own way and a man can do nothing with her.

What a pity that most of our most brilliant and original ideas did not present themselves to us first.

Most men would find it a difficult matter to tell all they know; not that they know much; but the difficulty would arise in trying to winnow what they do know from what they imagine they know.

If a man is always as old as he feels, many men pass from youth to old age in a single night—from the evening before to the morning after.

L. DE V. MATTHEWMAN.



NO CHANCE FOR HER

HE—I'm a single man.

THE WIDOW—Are you a woman-hater?

"Oh, no; and I don't care to be one."

THE HEART OF THE WORLD

By Marvin Dana

THE carriage rolled swiftly up Hampstead Hill and stopped before a house that shone white in the green frame of its grounds. The footman sprang down and unfastened the door. A man got out, and turning, helped a woman to alight. Then the two entered through the gate the footman held open—for this *bijou* residence had neither lodge nor drive—and walked slowly toward the house, while the carriage rolled away to the stables.

The butler opened the door for them and they passed into the hall together.

"Wait for me in the drawing-room," the woman said. "I'll get into something more comfy."

But the man stood still, gazing intently after her as she mounted the stairs, noting with all his soul her grace and dignity, to which now the trailing folds of her opera cloak gave a royal charm. On the landing she turned and smiled down on him. A moment later she had disappeared from his eager sight, and he moved away, sighing.

A word from the waiting servant recalled him to himself, and he paused to lay off his overcoat. This done, he went into the drawing-room to await her coming.

"To-night, yes, to-night," he murmured, "she must decide." This was the whole burden of his thoughts during the interval before her return to him.

When at last she appeared he rose quickly and advanced toward her, his eyes aglow with pleading. She was beautiful. The dainty draperies of her house gown wherever they touched

her form gave elusive suggestions of a figure tall, lithe and virginal, yet sumptuous. The face above was a harmony unique as fair. The great eyes were clear as running waters at noontime, clear as those of a leopard, yet shining with emotions, full of dreams and wonderings and tenderness, the eyes of a woman who had learned much, who had forgotten nothing, who desired more—desired all.

Just now there was much gentle kindness in the gaze she gave the man, yet her words betrayed nothing.

"Come out on the balcony," she said, and led him through the dining-room and a great window. He arranged a chair for her with a cushion at her back, then seated himself at his ease close by.

"I may smoke?" he asked, producing his cigarette case.

"Of course. I'll take one, too, please."

"These you will not like. Wait a moment."

He rose alertly, pleased to serve her, and from a box on the sideboard in the dining-room secured some of the miniature cigarettes she affected. These he brought to her, and then lighted and held a vesta.

She sank back in her chair and rested, smoking lazily. Both were silent for a little, while they gazed, meditative, on the scene of tranquil beauty beyond the balcony.

And to their vision this might have been a primeval forest. Far as their eyes could see ran a thicket of trees, whose branches interlaced to hide with bowers of green the gardens

that lay beneath and the walls that marked the boundaries. The houses beyond were set lower on the hill, so that over the farthest trees only the sky line showed blackly blue, blazoned with the full moon that shone undimmed by any veil of smoke at this midnight hour. The north wind sweeping over the verdure of the near-by heath brought a soft, penetrating perfume of earth and flowers, and with it there came at intervals, sadly, brokenly, the golden notes of a nightingale.

The man's heart throbbed under the witchery of this hour beside the woman he loved. In a swift resolve he turned to her and spoke:

"Helen, I love you!"

He moved his hand and rested it on hers. She started a little, and turning, gave him one long look, a look of questioning and wistfulness; her eyes met his fully and searched as if to learn the most secret truth of his soul. Vaguely she was aware of his handsome face, manly, clever, strong, sincere, but just now she cared only for knowledge of his deeper self. So she gazed mutely into his eyes, seeking and seeking, until the tension of her regard wrought on him, and he spoke again as if in answer:

"Surely you do not doubt me. You know that I love you—you know it, Helen."

"Yes," she answered, softly, "I believe that. But——"

"Then make me happy. Come with me, leave all this, love me. Come with me out into the world, out and away from all we have known into a new paradise that shall be ours always. Dearest, give me my happiness!"

He fell silent, waiting, hoping, praying. The woman, too, was silent a space. Then she spoke, doubtfully:

"I would willingly go with you, would give you your happiness, were I but sure of my own. But after all, I do not love you."

"I would make you happy. You may trust that to me."

"In many ways, yes, I may believe

that, for already you do. You are sympathetic. I can tell you all my thoughts, for you are eager to know them, and you understand. You talk to me of things I love as no one else does. Before you came into my life it was wholly barren. Now it is richer, sweeter, because of you. Yes, John, I am grateful to you; you have done much for me. But I do not love you."

The man was wise; he did not urge her to any change of mood. On the contrary, he spoke only of that which must, he knew, strongly attract her, of that which her spirit most craved.

"No, I do not see why you should love me with that depth and power of which you are capable. I do not expect that—not yet. It may come in time, though, indeed, I dare not anticipate it—I am not worthy of it. But at least I love you. I cannot help that—it is my glory—the one thing for which I dare honor myself. My love is not merely a gross thing. Ah, dear, let us go together through the world; let us see again, and together, the wonders of earth, an earth illumined by love. You have been here and there, sight-seeing in the crowd, in the whirl of society always; you have wandered through the world heedlessly, superficially looking on a thousand things without realization, because love was not with you; now, dearest, come with me—I know your heart and your desires—let us two as one seek out all that is strange and wonderful of earth, trying ever to see truly, to understand something of the meaning in it all. Desert and mountain, old temples, strange races, life of the North and of the South, even all the life of the world, let us see the love that is its soul, and so come to understand, you and I, in part at least, the mystery and beauty of God's great plan. Deep down in your heart of hearts you think of countless things concerning which you never speak, for there has been no one to whom you could speak. These things are the greatest, the most vital in your life, as they are in mine. Let us live as we would choose to live. We have a right to

happiness, else there is no justice in the universe. Reach out your hand and lay hold of it. I am not a saint. I tell you clearly that your beauty thrills my every nerve, that to kiss your lips would be an ecstasy beyond all dreams. And yet I love you beyond that, more deeply, more tenderly, for the loveliness of your mind, for the splendor of your spirit."

The woman's eyes had grown darker, more luminous beneath the moonbeams. Now, as the man paused, she spoke with curious stress:

"Almost I could love you as you deserve. Always you touch my inner thought. Oh, yes, yes, I hate my life—I hate it! It seems to me that I am forever outside of all that is truly precious. For years and years my existence has been no more than one long round of dinners and balls and operas and teas and receptions and house parties and a hundred like things that constitute the tiresome social routine. Yet sometimes in a moment of loneliness my soul vibrates in harmony with that subtle spirit which makes real life. Now and again, in the rush of the hunt, at the opera, when Wagner's heart is laid bare by some poignant note, on the great plains of the East's desolation, in the gloomy recesses of a fjord, in St. James's Park at midnight, when the glory of nature shines as a jewel within its setting of man's palaces, even here in the night, sometimes my soul opens to reveal itself for a little glimpse that is yet an unveiling of mysteries beyond comprehension. Do such strange, vague things interest you, too? Then, yes, I could go with you. You care for me beyond face and form—ah, yes, I could go with you."

"Helen, my darling, my love!" The man's voice was low, tremulous. His face drew near to hers, and slowly, reverently, he kissed her on the lips.

There was a silence, while the man was billowed in raptures, but the woman only wondered. It was she that spoke again.

"I loved my husband. Even now I think I love him. But there is no

longer any sympathy between us. He seems to care only for his stocks, his companies, and what the money he makes brings in the form of a house and servants, an aristocratic visiting list, the power of entertaining a duke, the privilege of dropping in at the Carlton, a party of pretty women for supper at the Savoy or Prince's, or my portrait in the Academy. Yet he was a Vermont country boy before he made his money and married me. Now he is an expatriate of the expatriates—this really seems home to him, I suppose. It is not home to me."

She paused for a moment, and when she resumed speaking there was a new note of bitterness in her voice.

"Home! Why, I have never had a home—never. Can you understand what that means, you whose family seat has been almost as to-day for four centuries? Think of my loneliness, my girlhood in a convent, my life afterward until my marriage, a constant moving from one hotel to another with my father, and ever since a passing from rented house to rented house! You spoke of our wandering about the world; no, I would rather live in the traditional cottage, somewhere, anywhere in a fixed abode, in the Scotch mountains, perhaps, to remain there for the rest of my life, there to make a true home, mine to know and to love, a spot where tree and flower and turf and brook could grow dearer and dearer through changing years, until at last my body might lie among them to share in their being, while my soul passed on to other things I loved. Yes, think of it; I have never had a home!"

The pathos in her voice smote him.

"I will make you a home," he whispered, gently, "a true home, wherever you will, in any country, of any kind, great or humble, at your pleasure, a home for you—and me. Let me do this; give me my happiness, and in giving it you will find your own."

Again the silence fell. The wom-

an looked out over the night, dreaming of distant days. The man beside her sat with eyes unwaveringly turned to hers, and the strength of his passion flowed out from him and circled about her, until at last she turned with a little cry and cast herself on his breast in complete abandonment.

"Yes, yes, I will go with you. Let it be soon—to-morrow!" and her lips met his.

When he had gone the woman went up to her room, and there, having dismissed her maid, gave herself over to meditation. She felt no regret that she had promised to fly from the husband whom once she loved; she had no fear concerning society's scorn. Her own contempt for the conventional life saved her from any interest in the world's good or bad report. She had no friends save in an artificial sense—no one in all the world whom she deeply loved, by whom in turn she was beloved. Her constant yearning for a life simpler, sincerer, more in touch with the permanent things, found food for hope in this seclusion with a man whose mind and heart were in sympathy with hers. That she did not love him disturbed her not at all, for she loved no one else. His desires were hers; together they would find content in a form of life that to her husband, to her friends, must seem a martyrdom.

She was lying stretched lazily on a sofa in her dressing-room when a gentle knock sounded on the door. In response to her call her husband entered.

"I did not know you had come in," she remarked, pleasantly.

"I'm only this moment back from the club," he answered. "I—I have something to tell you."

An unfamiliar quality in his voice caused her to look at him more closely, and she noted that his face was paler than usual, his brow furrowed, his eyes sunken.

"You are not ill, Floyd?" she asked, with a pang of apprehension.

"No, no." He shook his head

nervously. "But I have bad news—the worst."

"What can you mean? The Duke has canceled his acceptance?"

"Good Lord, no! What do I care for dukes, or for anything else, for that matter, except as toys to please you? No, Helen, this is beyond such follies. I—we are ruined—penniless."

"Oh!"

Her ejaculation was one of astonishment rather than of dismay. In all her life she had never known the lack of money. Now, at first, she was quite unable to realize in the least what it might mean, and she sat silent, striving crudely to imagine the effect poverty might have on one's life.

Her husband's voice broke in on her reverie. He had risen and was walking restlessly to and fro before her. His pallor had passed and a flush of excitement touched his cheeks.

"Of course you will blame me—I blame myself. I've been wonderfully successful in the past. I thought I must remain so always. But this last slump caught me—took everything I had, in fact. You must go back to your father in New York. You can get a divorce for non-support. I've known for a long time that you never loved me, so I don't suppose it matters much—you will be as happy, or happier."

The woman was moved to vehement protest:

"I did love you, Floyd. I loved you when I married you. You——"

But the husband interrupted, with a sneer:

"Love! You do not know what the word means! What can you know of love? You! rushing here and there, your whole life one circle of social gaieties. There is no place for love in such a life, though room in plenty for flirtations—they're quite a proper and necessary part of it, provided you're chaperoned and discreet. But neither shallow sentiment nor brute ardor is love, nor ever will be. You to say that you loved me! You

have no right to speak of love! You! Oh, I know you are clean and womanly and wholesome, but your life is centred on trifling things. You have starved the deeper part of yourself until it is dead! I never dreamed of speaking to you like this. I meant only to tell you of the financial disaster, to receive your reproaches uncomplainingly, to send you away without unnecessary revelation of my heart. But when you said that you once loved me you tried my self-restraint too far, and I tell you again that it is not true. No, it is not true!"

"What right have you to judge my power of loving?"

"The supreme right of knowledge. I have loved!"

"You have loved! How! Whom?"

"As a man should love. I have loved you!"

"You have loved me? How dare you say it!"

The woman laughed mockingly.

The man paused and faced her with lowering brow.

"No sacrilege! Love is sacred, if you have any remnant of a woman's heart!" His voice softened wonderfully as he continued: "When I saw you first, Helen, I saw an angel. I loved you even then, ignorantly yet truly. And always since, day by day, my love has deepened, it has grown beyond any description in words of mine. Most of all I have loved that part of you which has dwindled until now it seems almost extinguished. You are more beautiful than ever before, your mind more keen and polished. But your spirit—the real you—what of it? That which I love most I mourn as one might mourn a lover dying. What has it to feed on? And the spirit must have its food or it must surely die! It cannot live on royal drawing-rooms and bubbles of champagne. You have given yourself up to the ornamental details of one unadmirable phase of life. You have given up all else for the sake of a petty, frivolous success that to any being a single sphere above ours must seem contemptible and absurd. And I have kept silent and toiled my best to

buy you your playthings, hoping and praying always that you might waken. That hope was vain. Now I can no longer give you the things you crave. I must let you go, look no more on your beauty. It would break my heart were not my heart already broken. Yet this last matters little, for in very truth I lost you long ago."

The woman's eyes were wet. She could not speak, and it was with a certain relief that after a little she heard him continue:

"These heroics must bore you horribly. Forgive me. You are always kind, Helen. Let me tell you now how much I regret all the annoyance this change must cause you."

She strove to answer as calmly as he spoke. "I am only sorry on your account. You say you have lost everything?"

"Practically everything."

"You mean that you still have a little?"

The husband exhibited traces of embarrassment.

"I have a small place in Vermont, four hundred acres, house and barn and stock—a good farm, in fact."

"Just where?"

"In Charlotte."

"Why, that's the town where you were born, isn't it? You never told me that you had an estate there."

"Well, you see I only bought it a few years ago. To tell you the truth, it's the old place. It was sold when father died—it had to be. But after I had money I was always trying to get it, and finally I succeeded. It was home to me, Helen. It had been in the family five generations. I lived there the first eighteen years of my life. I know every rod of it, mountain and field and brook. It runs down to Lake Champlain on one side and just touches the mountains on the other. Oh, it is beautiful there, the hills, the splendid meadows, the woods, the streams, the loveliest bit of earth under the sky. And it's home to me!"

She had been listening with shining eyes, and now as he stopped short she cried out, eagerly:

"Would you like to live there? Could you give up money-getting and all this sort of thing, the life we are living? Could you? Could you live out of the world like that, loving earth and sky and tree and flower, every living thing, thinking your own thoughts, finding entertainment and joy in your own mind and soul? Could you live content there in your Vermont home?"

A strange light flashed in his eyes.

"It has been the dream of my life to take you there, to teach you, too, to love it, to find in it the joy I find in it. Yes, I have dreamed of going there with you, of making it your home as well as mine. Oh, the ideal life of my ambition! to have our best friends with us sometimes, to go about, out into the old life now and then, but to make there our true home, not rusting, but growing in the strength of love and happiness."

He paused, and there was a hush over them. Suddenly it was broken by the wife, who spoke in a voice strained by desperate resolve.

"We have been blind, blind—both of us! I must tell you of my mistake, my horrible mistake—the wrong I have done you!"

With that she told him the story of the evening, told it all. And her last words were: "Understand me well—I know that I have no right to your

forgiveness. Yet remember, I told him that I had no love for him, that I loved you once, that I had loved none since. I told him—God forgive me!—that you had ceased to care for me. I only promised to go with him that I might escape the garish life here, that I might find somewhere a home. And now—oh, I cannot understand our blindness, or how we grew apart! No, no, my spirit is not dead, but it has been starving. You tell me of the home you love; oh, could you but forgive me and take me there! I would have gone with him to flee despair; I would go with you to find utter happiness."

The husband took her in his arms with joy in his eyes.

"There is nothing to forgive. It is our mode of life that has made us blind. There is nothing to forgive—if you would rather run away with me. You have proved to me that your desire and mine are one. We will leave all this and go home together."

The north wind sweeping over the verdure of the near-by heath brought to the open window a soft, penetrating perfume of earth and flowers, and with it there came at intervals the golden notes of a nightingale, singing peace to the stars, and the echo of the song sounded in their hearts.



THREATENING A BOLT

"BUT you will thunder down the ages!" the admiring constituent cried. The Great Politician looked at him perplexedly.

"Sometimes I imagine I am going to thunder!" he said.



WOMAN'S WAY

WHEN a man asks a woman to marry him she says:

1. "Don't be ridiculous!"
2. "Yes."

That is, she gives him good advice and straightway deprives him of the opportunity to follow it.

SONNETS TO A LOVER

By Myrtle Reed

I—VIOLETS

I HOLD thy violets against my face
And deeply breathe the haunting, purple scent
That fills my weary heart with sweet content
And lays upon my soul a chrismal grace;
The air around me for a little space
Is heavy with the fragrance they have lent,
And every passing wind that heavenward went
Has held thy blossoms in a close embrace.

I think I love the violets best of all
Because of that hushed sweetness, far and faint
As star dust through the darkness dimly sown;
Forever do they hold my sense in thrall,
My spirit kneels as to some imaged saint—
For they—and thou—were made to be my own.

II—AN OLD LOVE SONG

As if upon my heart-strings softly played
By angel hands that touch the chords unseen,
Through all the dead, sweet years that lie between,
There comes the music of a serenade.
Of olden dreams the melody is made,
Of violets that bloom amid the green;
And like a benediction, calm, serene,
A gentle peace upon my soul is laid.

And yet, forgive me if the hot tears start,
When at the end the deep chords seem to pause
And great arpeggios swell out clear and strong,
For thou hast kept the sun within my heart
And I must weep for very joy because
Our years of love are mingled with the song.

III—THE LOVELIGHT

Strong surges of the world around thee roll
And high thy pulses burn at fever heat
Amid the thousands in the city street
Whose eyes are strained to see a distant goal.
The human tide moves far past thy control
And weary grow thy hastening, eager feet,
When heavy-eyed despair has come to beat
With sickening terrors on thy tired soul.

THE SMART SET

My soldier, no! I will not have thee fail!
 What though untoward Fate against thee seems
 And far afield has ever made thee roam?
 Thy steadfast courage must at last prevail,
 And through the lattice-lights my candle gleams
 To lead my wanderer back to love and home.

IV—THE WATER OF FORGETFULNESS

By Stygian shores a sunless river flows,
 Through barren fields and desert wastes of sand;
 And on its marge strange, ghostly travelers stand,
 To touch the somber flood and find repose.
 One draught of Lethe, and there comes to those
 Who journey to that undiscovered strand,
 A peace unknown upon this troubled land,
 Which slowly into marble calmness grows.

Some day I, too, from thy dear arms withdrawn,
 On that last voyage sped by prayer and dirge,
 Shall stand with those who wait beside the stream;
 But though beyond me lies immortal dawn,
 I take no cup of peace from that grim surge
 If thus my heart shall lose its earthly dream.

V—AFTERWARD

When Death's white poppies rest upon my eyes,
 As if my last rebellion He forgave;
 When through the transept and the vaulted nave
 The solemn measures of my requiem rise,
 Think not that in the dust before thee lies
 Thy heart of hearts, beyond thy strength to save
 From secret hiding in a distant grave,
 For thou hast still the love that never dies.

So kneel beside me, Dearest, with thy palm
 Laid on my face in that old tenderness
 Too great for words, since there is no regret
 Twixt thee and me; and when the chanted psalm
 Has softly changed to prayer and holiness,
 Think not, O soul of mine, that I forget!



CHIPS THAT HADN'T BEEN CASHED

HEWITT—When your boy was at my house to-day he swallowed five dollars' worth of poker chips.

JEWETT—Is that so?

HEWITT—Yes; I'd like the money, please.

LORD CAMMARLEIGH'S SECRET

By Roy Horniman

WHEN Anthony Brooke woke up one fine morning to hear his landlady's voice at the door demanding a parley, the sensation was one of acute irritation that he had no means of making her a slave to his desire, which was for breakfast.

"What is it?" he asked, sleepily.

"I've brought your breakfast, Mr. Brooke. Have you got the money to pay for it, or shall I take it down-stairs again?"

He had heard the latter threat for some days, but as yet, although no payment had been forthcoming, the breakfast had been brought in and plumped angrily down on the dressing table—the only table. To-day, however, there was the sound of another voice cheering his landlady on to battle. Evidently the sympathies of a neighbor had been invoked.

"You're too soft-eared, Mrs. Leech, and your own brother a police officer, too. There's no need for you to put up with it."

Mrs. Leech, thus urged, squealed through the keyhole, "I shall take it down if it ain't paid for."

But Anthony was hungry, desperately so, and pride is not the bride of hunger.

"Don't take it away, Mrs. Leech. I need it," he said, pleadingly.

"I dessay you do, but I've got my rent to pay."

"Oh, that's silly."

"Is it? You're nothing to me, Mr. Brooke."

Here the voice in the background broke in, with immeasurable scorn: "Calls hisself a gentleman, does he?"

"I never said so." A sense of humor was Anthony's weak point in

these difficulties. It hardly conduced to conciliation. Mrs. Leech was not up to the appreciation of such delicate badinage.

"You'd be the only one as 'd dare to tell such an untruth, if you did say it," was the retort, the last part of which died away in the direction of the kitchen.

Anthony sat on the edge of his bed gazing blankly before him. No day need be absolutely hopeless if built on the sure foundation of breakfast. Now this had failed. To add to his depression it was raining. This meant that he must make a dash for the nearest public institution, and he was meditatively debating the respective merits of a picture gallery and a museum. The great thing was to get out of the way of his landlady during the daytime.

Suddenly he remembered that he had put his boots outside the door. This was absurd, as many a rainy day had come and gone since his landlady had condescended to clean them. If she had taken them down-stairs it involved entering into negotiations for their return, negotiations that must inevitably lead to a further financial discussion. It had really been very thoughtless of him. He opened the door cautiously to see if by chance they were still in the same place. They were gone. He was finishing dressing when he heard them dropped quite respectfully on the mat outside. After waiting a minute to allow for the retirement of the enemy, he drew them in. He could have seen his face in them.

"I'd sooner have had breakfast," he murmured. However, he tight-

ened his waistband and prepared for flight; that is to say, the usual morning maneuver of getting out of the front door before Mrs. Leech could intercept and harangue him.

He opened the door with gentle secrecy—to find himself face to face with the landlady.

"I'll bring your breakfast, sir," she said, quite gently.

At that Anthony was much mollified. After all, he reflected, it was unnatural for a woman to go to extreme lengths with a person so charming as himself. But he drew himself up and the corners of his mouth went down.

"Thank you, I shall go out to breakfast," he said, conscious of the possession of three halfpence.

"Then it's a pity you don't pay your bill!" retorted Mrs. Leech, angry that her advances should have been rebuffed.

Anthony walked out into the quiet little Pimlico street. Luckily the rain had ceased and the sun had come out. He walked briskly for the first half-mile. The early morning hour holds a promise all its own, a hopefulness dependent on nothing tangible.

His pace slackened as he neared the busier parts; he began to look about him and to take that interest in other people's business peculiar to those who have none of their own. The average passer-by would, at a first glance, have put him down as the cherished darling of a happy home. He was exceedingly handsome, in a pleasant, fair manner, with nice eyes, a winning smile and a strong jaw. His figure was of middle height and slender, and he held himself straight, as if he were the most prosperous person in the world, wearing his light tweed suit—none too new—with that indescribable capacity for making it seem quite the smartest thing he could have worn.

Suddenly his mood changed; his brows contracted. He began to revolve schemes. Something must be done. Luckily he had a dinner invitation for that evening. He could

last till then, and perhaps this might be the day on which his real career would begin. It was a consolation to know that each succeeding day held this possibility. Still, he must go on striving. It was impossible matters could continue as they were. He would go into the Park and think it out. It would be quite dry now.

He was passing through Belgrave Square. A few yards in front of him a victoria was drawn up at the curb. A tall, aristocratic-looking man, who was hatless and had evidently but just come out of the house, was talking to a lady seated in the carriage. While Anthony was still three or four yards off he heard someone behind him say, "That is Lord Cammarleigh—the Marquis of Cammarleigh."

Anthony gazed the more curiously, for everyone is interested in what a marquis is like, whatever some people may pretend. And what Anthony took in at once was the curious restlessness of the man's eyes. They glanced hither and thither as if he were hunted, and the observer found himself murmuring, "That is a man who is afraid. He has a secret."

As Anthony passed he brushed his lordship's coat. Lord Cammarleigh turned round with an exclamation almost of terror. At that moment the lady in the carriage held out her hand, and an instant later she had driven off.

Suddenly an idea, together with a complete course of action, rose in Anthony's brain as if by magic. He ran swiftly up the steps, and just as his lordship was about to enter the house he tapped him on the shoulder. The other turned, and their eyes met.

"I know your secret," said Anthony, simply.

The man grew livid and staggered back against the door pillar.

They stood thus for some seconds, Anthony looking at his victim with pitiless eyes, Cammarleigh breathing heavily, looking at him with a mute appeal for mercy.

"What do you want?" he asked at last.

"Can't we go inside?" said An-

thony. "You look upset, and your servants might talk."

Without a word Lord Cammarleigh turned and led the way into the house and down the spacious hall to a door at the back. Anthony followed, bearing himself with the most perfect assurance. He had always said to himself that he should never know real domestic comfort till he was lodged in a palace. The room that they entered was delightful, difficult to describe in detail, but full of books, divans and other comforts and luxuries. The great French windows were thrown open, and a flight of three steps led into a small garden that was a scarlet blaze. Both the room, which was almost detached from the rest of the house, and the garden, surrounded by its high white wall, were inviting and restful.

The Marquis stood aside as Anthony entered, looking round to see that nobody was about. He then came in gently, closed the door and turned to Anthony, who had already sunk into the most comfortable seat in the room with a sigh of appreciation.

"Come, let's be friends and talk," Anthony said, cheerfully, and laughed.

The absolute terror that had remained till now in Cammarleigh's eyes died away. Anthony's laugh was not only charming but in this case reassuring.

"I haven't a card," continued Anthony, "but my name is Anthony Brooke, gentleman." He emphasized the last word as if he wished to make Cammarleigh understand that he intended to be treated as such.

Lord Cammarleigh poured some brandy from a decanter into a glass and drank it. "How did you find out?" he asked in a low, unsteady voice.

Anthony looked at him and smiled. "I don't think I'll tell you that. In fact, I don't think it would be policy on my part. It's sufficient that I did find out."

"What do you want?" asked Cammarleigh, somewhat fortified by the brandy.

"Well, to begin with, I want a

drink; although I'm sorry for your sake that it's not all I shall want." He rose and helped himself to brandy.

"May I ask you to ring for some soda water?"

Lord Cammarleigh indicated a siphon on a table near.

"I saw that," Anthony answered, coolly, "but I don't care for anything but soda. May I?" And he touched the bell.

His lordship rose indignantly, thought better of it, and sat down again. The servant appeared and the order was given.

While waiting for the soda water Anthony commented on the garden. "I see your garden is all red. I should have thought that, considering what is on your conscience, a garden of lilies would have been more antiseptic."

Lord Cammarleigh shivered. One long, nervous, white hand was stretched forth; and Anthony, who was watching him in the glass, saw the next moment the gleam of a revolver. He turned to Cammarleigh with a winning smile.

"Now you know perfectly well you would have done that long ago if you had dared. You had better give it to me. The want of it may cure you of theatricals."

The servant entered at that moment with the soda water. Anthony drank his brandy and soda and was refreshed.

"Now let me put my case in a nutshell." He took a cigarette from a cedar-wood box close by and lighted it. "I am, as I said before, Anthony Brooke, gentleman. I have neither money nor prospects, but many large fortunes are made by the discovery and patenting of secrets. I patent your secret by keeping it to myself. I propose, till I decide what I wish to be, and how and where I wish to live, to remain here as your private secretary. By the way, have you one?"

"I have."

"Quite so. Poor young man—he'll have to go! Never mind; you can compensate him."

"I must ask you to be careful. Name your price and go!"

"I haven't decided on my price yet, and I'm certainly not going. And don't begin talking like that, because you must get on with me somehow. You may call me Tony, if you like."

"Your price!" demanded Lord Cammarleigh, almost sharply. He was pulling himself together—this would never do.

"If you talk to me in that way I will at once expose you."

Cammarleigh subsided.

"Yes," continued Anthony, "the position of your private secretary will, I think, suit me to perfection. You shall give me a suite of rooms, and I'll draw my salary as I want it. I sha'n't ruin you—I'm really much too clever for that."

"Suite of rooms—here?"

"Why not? It would be absurd to assert that I should look out of place."

Cammarleigh felt that Anthony was right, and he was even somewhat thankful in his heart that the person who had such a hold on him should be so presentable; but still—to have an absolute stranger coming into the house, becoming the actual, if not the apparent master, it was impossible! And so he told Anthony, always with an eye to keeping him in a good temper. He was in momentary agony lest this self-assured young gentleman should open the door and announce what he had discovered to the house.

Anthony listened to his arguments, noting with inward amusement the conciliatory restraint that ran through all he said. When he had finished, without deigning to discuss the matter further, Anthony rose.

"Where is your secretary?"

"He has two days' leave."

"So much the better. Send his things after him. Now let us go and look at the house." He moved toward the door. For one moment Cammarleigh discussed with himself the feasibility of leaping from behind and throttling his persecutor, but as

he was almost in the act of doing so he remembered that possibly others knew of Anthony's whereabouts.

"As far as your servants are concerned, you had better tell them at once that I am your new secretary, and you might add that I am likely to have a deal more authority than my predecessors. I don't suppose they'll make much comment. You are the sort of man who is always having new secretaries."

Anthony selected a charming sitting-room and bedroom on the third floor, both looking out on the Square.

"Were these rooms your late secretary's?"

"He slept at the back," said Cammarleigh, tartly.

"Ah, but he didn't know—" began Anthony.

"Sh!" cried Lord Cammarleigh. Any inclination on Anthony's part to expatiate on the dreaded subject was sufficient to make him turn ashen.

They went down-stairs again, and Cammarleigh, under Anthony's directions, rang for the butler and explained the new secretary's arrival and status.

"Another of 'em! Wonder 'ow long he'll stop," thought Mr. Gregsby.

Lord Cammarleigh then wrote Anthony a cheque, also under the latter's direction. It was for two hundred and fifty pounds.

"It'll do to get some decent clothes and a nice, quiet tie-pin. You can give me a cigarette case. Anybody coming to lunch?" he asked.

"I am lunching with the Prime Minister," said Cammarleigh, stiffly.

"Don't do that. You can't possibly take me with you, and we don't half know each other yet."

So they lunched together, and the Prime Minister, his wife and a distinguished foreign diplomatist were kept waiting.

Cammarleigh had to admit that Anthony was excellent company. Anthony was determined that the iron hand should be concealed by the velvet glove. It was better manners, and certainly more convenient. The

velvet glove in this case was represented by Anthony showing the best conversational powers, and insidiously flattering Cammarleigh on his capacity as a politician. Cammarleigh prided himself on being an independent critic of all governments, principally because, as no government had ever thought it worth while to smother his criticism beneath the weight of place, it was the only rôle open to him. Politics had a peculiar fascination for Anthony, who believed that great politicians, like great generals, must be made before they are thirty. He had already a scheme arranging itself in his head. He had, to say the least of it, a pretty wit, and Lord Cammarleigh, who had succeeded to the title when he was six years of age, and had lived all his life in an atmosphere of artificial respect and assumed deference that his inferiors in station were far from feeling for him, found himself laughing almost boisterously.

After lunch Anthony went out. "Are you dining at home?" he asked, as he left the room.

"I am afraid I shall be engaged all the rest of the day," said Cammarleigh, who was getting quite affable. He was reflecting that, after all, things might have been worse, and that it was best to be friendly.

"That will suit me admirably," answered Anthony. "I've heaps of things to do."

After a visit to the bank Anthony spent the afternoon racing about London in a hansom, buying new clothes and the nice, quiet tie-pin. He paid a visit to Mrs. Leech in order to settle his bill, and rescued a few clothes that he had been compelled to part with temporarily. These, with the addition of a new tall hat, ties, gloves, etc., would do to go on with till the tailors got through with his orders.

"I think I'm all right," he murmured, as he drove down Piccadilly in the blazing afternoon sunshine, watching the blue smoke of his cigarette dissipate in the wind. "Is there any sensation so exhilarating as that of a

successful adventurer!" Suddenly he burst out laughing, as the absurdity of the situation struck him for the first time with full force. He laughed, indeed, till the driver opened the little trap-door above him to see if he was in a fit. At last he became serious again and fell to thinking deeply. Then, as he rustled the crisp banknotes in his pocket, he remembered that he had the evening ahead in which to do as he liked. "I'll go and see Bianca and take her out. I don't see why I shouldn't be better friends with her than ever. I can afford it now. Of course, I must keep her in the background. I might want to make a good marriage. Lucky I've got no relations to ask questions."

The next morning he took Cammarleigh's letters into his room and asked which he should answer. Cammarleigh opened his eyes wide. He had not hoped for one moment to get any work out of Anthony. Anthony noticed his surprise. "Oh, it's best to play the game properly," he said.

Cammarleigh certainly had to admit that his new secretary showed capacity. He displayed absolute genius in replying to the lady with the fund for something or other, sending the minimum of contribution in such a way as to secure for Cammarleigh the maximum of advertisement.

The first time that Anthony found it necessary to put on the screw was on the subject of entertaining. Cammarleigh, one of the richest peers in England, with huge estates in all four countries, was noted for the bad dinners he gave.

"If you give bad dinners," remarked Anthony, "it may prove a very serious check to my advancement."

"Who says I give bad dinners?" demanded Cammarleigh, angrily.

"Your butler. He says the only people who come are those who can't afford to stop away, and that he believes they dine beforehand."

"I shall dismiss Gregsby at once."

"You will do nothing of the kind. You must get a new chef and kitchen

staff, and before a month is out your dinners shall be talked of everywhere. I should like to write a menu of the perfect dinner as a model for royalty."

"Dinners cost a lot of money," grumbled Cammarleigh, surlily.

"Precisely. That is why you can easily distinguish yourself in this direction."

"How am I to account for you?"

"Every rich man has a right to a private secretary. Besides," added Anthony, sweetly, "people won't want me to be accounted for when they see that I am entertaining them with your money. And," he added, with a kind of carelessness that he invariably assumed when he meant Cammarleigh to understand that his request was a command, "you needn't convey the impression to the world that I am penniless."

Cammarleigh gave his dinner parties, and had the satisfaction of seeing that his private secretary was a great success; and Anthony became known as "that charming young man who has sprung from goodness knows where and manages Lord Cammarleigh's affairs so perfectly."

He took good care to allow nobody to treat him as a dependent. He manifested a lively interest in politics and startled Lord Cammarleigh one day by saying, "I see your second cousin, who represents the Cammarleigh district, has applied for the Chiltern Hundreds. Whom are they putting up in his place?"

"Well, the Heads in London have intimated to the local snobs that if they can select the Home Secretary's grand-nephew it will be agreeable to everybody, so I suppose the matter is settled."

"Ah," murmured Anthony, "the Prime Minister resents the personality of the Home Secretary. The Home Secretary is an ostentatious nobody with a conscience. I sha'n't offend the Prime Minister, so, of course, the matter is settled."

"What do you mean?"

"You must manage to put me up for Cammarleigh."

His lordship raved, argued, protested, swore—all to no purpose. In vain he pointed out that the selection of the candidate already chosen was part of a long-planned policy to annoy the Prime Minister. Anthony of course carried the day, although he loyally assisted his victim through the difficulties and humiliations that such a policy entailed. Anthony went down to Cammarleigh and flattered the local big-wigs, bribed the venal, made every woman in the place his champion, and finally delivered a speech that settled the matter. Cammarleigh watched all his proceedings as one in a dream.

"By the way," said Anthony one morning soon after the election, "Lady Sybil Binks is your niece, isn't she?"

"Lady Sybil is my sister's child. My sister and I do not speak." He said this with an outward dignity but with an inward dread of some new and humiliating demand.

"She is very beautiful," said Anthony, dreamily. "What did you and her mother quarrel about?"

"I don't see how that can interest you," snapped Cammarleigh.

"I think it will." Anthony's voice was colored by a slow, hard intonation.

"Look here," said Lord Cammarleigh, rising to his feet, "for eight months I have been your slave. You've poisoned every hour of my existence. You've——"

"Come now," interrupted Anthony, "don't be silly. We've had some very good times together. Why, you've never laughed so much and so often in all your life."

But Cammarleigh had grown reckless. "You may think so, but here you are, a perfect stranger to me, living in my house, having drawn on me for something like thirty thousand pounds, most of which I believe you've put in the bank, because, on my soul, I seem to pay for everything. Your seat is about the safest there is, you've been down to stay with the Prime Minister, and you may be the son of a damned cook for all I know."

"Oh, come, your instinct teaches you better than that," said Anthony, gently.

"Go to the devil!" screamed Cammarleigh.

Anthony walked to the window and looked out. "Singular, the amount of leisure the police force seem to have!" he said, and he went out on the balcony.

"Come back!" Cammarleigh's voice was hoarse.

"Lady Sybil Binks is beautiful, isn't she?" asked Anthony. "What did you and her mother quarrel about?"

"Something to do with her dowry," said Cammarleigh, uncomfortably.

"I might have guessed as much," said Anthony, with a sigh. "Oh, Cammarleigh, when shall I teach you to go straight?"

"You are hardly the person to try," said Cammarleigh, feeling that he had got one in at last.

"You think that accounts for my failure? Well, perhaps. How soon can you make it convenient to call on your sister?"

"Do you actually mean to say that you want me to humiliate myself before her?"

"I don't care what you do before her, so long as you ask Lady Sybil and her mother to stay at the Abbey."

Lord Cammarleigh actually shed tears of chagrin. Anthony, sitting before him stony and complacent, the perfection of style and finish in dress, maddened him. "I shouldn't wonder if I killed you!" he said, with set teeth.

"I should wonder very much, and shall take very good care you don't. It will be very beautiful," he added, with his peculiar habit of delivering an oration to himself. "We shall walk on the terrace at Cammarleigh together. I shall ask her to be my wife among the roses, and you will tell her mother that I have a hundred and fifty thousand pounds in the library."

"A hundred and fifty thousand pounds in the library?" echoed Lord Cammarleigh, thoroughly dazed.

"I beg your pardon. I mean you will tell her mother in the library that I have a hundred and fifty thousand pounds."

"But you haven't!" almost sobbed Cammarleigh.

"Cammarleigh, don't be so coarse. You must understand perfectly what I mean."

"I haven't got so much money," moaned Cammarleigh.

"Not in your sovereign purse. But, my dear friend, I could ask you for double that sum, and you would never feel it."

"Oh, dear, oh, dear, when will this stop?"

"When I am married to Lady Sybil. When that hundred and fifty thousand is invested in my name—and not before! Let me see: Lady Sybil will have five thousand a year. My capital will represent at least another seven thousand. By a judicious use of Parliamentary influence I might double it. Yes, I think I may promise you on my word of honor as a gentleman that when all this is arranged I will never trouble you for money again."

Cammarleigh looked a little more comfortable. He had noticed that Anthony had a way of keeping his word.

"You see I have a heart," continued Anthony, "and there's a little, tiny place in it for you, and all the rest of it is for Lady Sybil."

Cammarleigh saw that his case was hopeless. He made friends with his sister, and restored to her what he had practically stolen at the time of her marriage.

Anthony took good care to let her know that it was under his advice her brother did so. Lady Solent, Lady Sybil's mother, was an obstinate woman, who was very fond of holding her own opinion against all the world, as she termed it. While other people were hinting to her that there was the atmosphere of an adventurer about Anthony she declared that she could see nothing in him but originality and ability; and, as she pointed out, the Binkses were by no means an

old family; in fact, till somewhere about 1880 they had been mere units in the great agricultural backbone of the country, and the workhouses of certain districts were full of those at whose expense the Binks peerage had been acquired. Still, Lady Sybil was as beautiful as the daughter of a hundred kings. She, as well as Anthony, felt supremely happy when their eyes met.

Anthony had shown himself worthy of his new position by forgetting his poverty as if it had never been. He calmly annexed Lady Sybil from under the nose of the young Duke of Severn.

Lord Cammarleigh looked on at the wooing and was powerless. Once or twice he remonstrated with Anthony, and as good as told him that this almost forcible entry into his own family was an impertinence, but, as Anthony asked, was he the sort of man to be frightened by the word impertinence?

When it was announced that they were engaged society gave a cry of wonderment, and its so-called journals insinuated daily. There were not wanting those who asserted that Anthony might have inherited Lord Cam-

marleigh's title but for the absence of a marriage certificate. But Anthony had Lady Sybil's mother on his side voluntarily and Lord Cammarleigh to back him up compulsorily—so what did it matter? He more than ever congratulated himself on not having a relation in the world. But Lord Cammarleigh gnashed his teeth nightly.

So Anthony was married and Lord Cammarleigh banked the hundred and fifty thousand. The daily papers announced that Mr. Anthony and Lady Sybil Brooke left for the Continent later in the afternoon.

As Lord Cammarleigh stood by his sister's side on the steps of the house in Belgrave Square, Anthony, who had already entered the carriage, beckoned to him, and bending his head forward so that Lady Sybil—who looked like a fairy princess—should not hear, he whispered:

"Cheer up. You're quite free again now."

Lord Cammarleigh turned to reënter the house when Anthony's voice again stopped him:

"By the way," he said, in an eager whisper, "what is your secret?"

Then the carriage dashed away.



SUPERSTITION

IN the waste places, in the dreadful night,
 When the wood whispers like a wandering mind,
 And silence sits and listens to the wind,
 Or 'mid the rocks, to some wild torrent's flight,
 Bat-browed thou wadest with thy wisp of light
 Among the pools the moon can never find,
 Or owlet-eyed, thou hookest to the blind,
 Deep blackness from some cave or haunted height.

He who beholds but once thy fearsome face
 Never again shall walk alone, but wan
 And terrible attendants are his doom—
 Unutterable thoughts and things that have no place
 In God or Beauty; that compel him on,
 Against all hope, into an endless gloom.

MADISON CAWEIN.

ART FOR LOVE'S SAKE

By Laura Cleveland Gaylord

KAUFFMANN was about to hold a morning rehearsal.

The great auditorium, with its rows on rows of vacant chairs, lay dismal and cheerless in the dull light. The musicians straggled in one by one and sat about the stage, talking a little now and again in a dispirited sort of way. Their voices and the wail of the violins echoed and re-echoed drearily through the emptiness.

A girl sitting in a corner behind the drums shivered nervously. They had said that Kauffmann would hear her to-day, and she was there, but the little courage she had possessed at the beginning was fast leaving her in the flat reality of this morning rehearsal.

Could this be the same orchestra that had thrilled and pulsed and quivered in such warm, magnetic sympathy with its conductor, the night before, these commonplace, apathetic-looking men? It did not seem possible.

The door at the side of the stage opened, and a man walked quickly across to the conductor's stand. It was the conductor, Kauffmann himself.

He glanced over his music, turned up a corner or two, tapped sharply for attention and began.

Following the movement of his hand came the violins, pianissimo at first, but gradually increasing, then the wood wind, still crescendo, and finally the crash of the brass and the thunder of the drums. It was a new piece, to be played for the first time that night, and this was the final rehearsal.

The girl sat in her corner and watched Kauffmann's stern face, wondering more and more at the perfection of his control over these many minds, the ease and certainty with which he swayed them, now this way, now that, from tenderest sweetness to passion, discord, storm, all with a motion of his hand, a sweep of his arm.

And gradually, as she watched, the secret of his power was revealed to her. Little by little the severity of his face relaxed, a light came into his eyes, a softness to his mouth, eradicating the hint of cruelty that lurked in the corners. His whole face glowed, and she saw that he was simply living every note of the music. Uplifted by his inspiration, her spirit soared with his on wings of warmth and light, higher and higher with the swelling notes of the music, until with a final rush and sweep, a crashing chord, it was ended.

He stepped down to speak to one of the first violins, and she caught her breath in the sudden descent to the cold commonplace. Then he returned to the stand, and looked round, questioning.

Someone motioned toward Nina, and Kauffmann nodded sharply to her.

She rose and made her way slowly past the musicians to his side. There was a heaviness, a lack of elasticity, all through her. She could not sing. Every chord in her throat was stiff and tense. Her hands were cold, her lips trembled. The relapse after the rapture of that wild flight had been too great.

As she went toward him she

looked up into his face for help and support, but found none. Broad forehead, heavy brows, deep-set eyes, strange, curving mouth—all alike were impassive, even stern, and in the line of his jaw she caught a suggestion of relentless power that made her shiver.

He gave her a searching glance.

"You have sung with an orchestra before?"

She shook her head.

"No? You may find it difficult. Will you give me your copy, please?"

The downward inflection made it a command.

"You sing without your notes, of course?"

This was only half a question, but she nodded.

The accompaniment began, sounding appallingly unfamiliar on the violins and flutes. She followed the notes along in a sort of sick dread.

If he would only play it twice!

But the end came. He turned to her with a little warning motion of his bâton, and she opened her mouth.

For one dreadful instant she could make no sound. Then her voice came, but so weak and uncertain that she hardly knew it. She glanced at his face. He was frowning slightly, and the look stung her. She pulled herself together and made her climax, after a fashion.

When she had finished he stood a moment stroking his lip.

"It is not good," he said at last, "but you will have to sing to-night. You appear in the latter part of the program. Be here by nine o'clock. Evening dress, please," and he dismissed her with a curt nod.

The blood that had gone to her heart while she sang, nearly stifling her, rushed to her face and burned there; tears of anger and humiliation smarted in her eyes. She threw up her head with the movement of a spirited horse under the lash, and the blood ebbed again, leaving her face pale and cold.

With the slightest possible bow she turned and walked proudly to the door, to creep miserably home and

throw herself on the bed in a passion of disgust at herself.

The house was ablaze with light and color. A smart shower of applause went round as the number came to an end. The conductor bowed, and crossing to the stage-door led out a slender girl in a black, low-necked dress.

She seemed perfectly composed, a certain defiance in the poise of her head and a slight compression of the lips being the only signs that spoke to the contrary. She had a thin, dark face and smooth, dark hair was wound round the back of her head in heavy braids. Her neck was a shade too thin, but she held herself well. She had an air, and there was a rustle of programs as the audience turned them to seek her name. The result was disappointment; nobody knew her.

The first notes of her song were uncertain, and people fanned themselves impatiently and wondered what Kauffmann meant by presenting an amateur to such an audience as this.

Gradually the voice grew steady, however, and the depth and richness of it were more clearly discernible. It was a mezzo-soprano, of the quality that makes one shiver unaccountably, and as the full tones poured out one after another the audience grew still.

When the song was over they applauded, moderately. The voice was good, well trained, evidently, but the girl did not seem to make the most of it. She appeared to need something to rouse her; she was not sufficiently dramatic. So said the audience.

Nina herself was glad to have been able to sing at all in the stage-fright that possessed her. She had had no idea it would be so terrifying to face the people. She had done her best under the circumstances, but she knew that best was far from good, and expected to hear no more from Kauffmann.

Great then was her surprise and almost overwhelming her happiness when on the next day Kauffmann's business manager called on her to

offer her the position of soloist in the orchestra's coming tour. She was surprised again at the sum offered in remuneration for her services. She found afterward that it was not large, as such things go; but at the time, alone as she was, with no pupils, and only two evening dresses left from the many that had been hers before the disasters that left her poor, it seemed princely.

She had enough worldliness to take the offer coolly, to accept it without great interest, even to hesitate a little before committing herself finally, but there was exultation within her.

When the door of her little parlor closed after the manager she threw herself down on the couch by the window and lay staring at the ceiling, trying to adjust herself to the new state of things. This offer meant so much—so very much—to her; independence of the uncle she hated, freedom, the opportunity to live her own life in her own way. At twenty-two she had already tasted deeply the bitterness of living on gifts grudgingly given, had raged and chafed in spirit against her bondage; and this—this was like a breath of fresh air in a close and stuffy place.

For Kauffmann as the means of her happiness she felt a boundless enthusiasm, almost adoration, and the thought of him made her leap to her feet, clasping her hands beneath her chin with a little ecstatic movement. How good he was, how very good! She could never be grateful enough. He would probably say something to-day in acknowledgment of her new position with regard to him, and then she would thank him.

Then it struck her that it must be nearly time for the rehearsal he had appointed, and she flew for her hat and coat. She would not keep him waiting on this day of all others.

She checked her swift steps in the corridor of the Music Hall and walked on the stage with an assumption of calm dignity that scarcely concealed the turbulent pleasure within her. Kauffmann was in his place. She looked at him expectantly as she came

toward him. This was the moment for the word of welcome from him, of gratitude from her, and her heart beat high.

Kauffmann glanced at her and nodded a brief good morning. Then he arranged a sheet of music on his stand, gave a word of direction to the orchestra and turned to her.

"You may try 'Butterflies,' if you please. That was one of your songs? It will serve as an encore. Mr. Hartz has some songs I should like to have you learn."

His tone was quietly, almost monotonously authoritative, and Nina stood under it passive in her bewilderment. Then the accompaniment began, and she found herself singing. She sang much better than she had done the night before. In the absence of the audience she was not so terror stricken, although Kauffmann himself, cold, emotionless, had anything but an inspiring effect.

He was grave all through it. At the end he looked the music over thoughtfully, marking passages here and there.

"We will go through it again," he said. "Please make that crescendo at the end of the second page a little more marked. The whole thing should be broader. I suppose you realize that a certain amateurishness is the worst fault in your singing. Your effects are not big enough. The same thing shows in acting; the amateur is afraid to let himself go, to get his arms away from his sides. That is virtually what you must do. Don't be afraid of your effects. Go at them with more of a sweep, more abandon. Now try again."

The crisp, curt sentences were like taps of a drum, striking sharply into her consciousness. She resented each one, the easy assumption of authority, the quiet, didactic manner. But in spite of it she found herself following his instructions and singing the better for it. It seemed inevitable, and against the inevitable one may not struggle.

They took up next the song she had sung the night before, and she

sang as never before in her life, nettled by his criticisms, fired by his encouragement, moved above and beyond herself by the whole personality of the man, the resistlessness, the force and fire of it. And when at the end, shaking with the effort she had made, she turned for the reward of a word to the man who had roused her to it, he said, merely:

"That is nearer it, but there is something lacking in your singing. I don't know just what it is. Perhaps I shall find out. That will do for this morning. Hartz will meet you with some music at the box-office as you go out, and Johnson will inform you as to our route, dates, and so forth. Good morning."

He turned on his heel and entered into conversation with a 'cellist.

Hot rage blazed within her, and she stood one passionate moment with words of rejection, of repudiation on her tongue. Then something like an arrow struck cold to her soul, and she turned away in silence, realizing with a sudden feeling of deadly languor that she would not leave him, that even with other positions open to her she would keep to this one.

The next day they started on the road tour.

Nightly she saw him stirred out of himself by his orchestra, his greater ideal self; she even saw his face change and grow tender at the solo playing of his favorite 'cellist or his first violin; but at her singing, never. Not once could she feel that she had touched him, that he considered her as anything but an automaton, a machine.

And a mere machine she seemed to be. Technically she sang not badly; her voice was well placed and in fair control, and she knew that its quality was good. But beyond a certain point she could not go. The musical journals called her a hard-working, conscientious singer, and she knew that so much was true of her, but she felt that it was not all the truth. She was convinced that she had in her something more than a capacity

for hard work, and she made desperate efforts to rise above her limitations.

Often she looked at Kauffmann and wondered if he had ever found out what was lacking in her singing, whether he would take the trouble to tell her if he knew.

He trained her vigorously at the rehearsals, but on that point he never spoke, and Nina never dared to ask.

And so she struggled on alone. Then it came to pass that the struggle grew too hard for her, and she failed visibly. Her eyes were dull, her manner listless and apathetic, her singing without spirit. It was all so hopeless. She was only a girl, and her young nature craved sympathy and support. A word of interest, of encouragement, would have meant much to her. Mrs. Gillette, her companion, a kindly but not very intelligent woman, was devotedly fond of Nina and considered her singing perfect in every particular, but Nina, grateful as she was for this affection and admiration, needed something more stimulating, criticisms more discriminating, the approval of a trained judgment, and these she never received.

So matters stood when they reached Cleveland after two months of travel.

It was a bad night, chilly and raw. The rain blew in great gusts against the windows and the wind wailed dismally.

Mrs. Gillette had gone out to dine, so that Nina was alone, and she grew intensely depressed in the solitude of her own room after dinner. She was nervous to begin with, and the stillness drove her wild. At length she rang for a carriage and drove round the corner to the theatre. It would be better to sit there within sound of the orchestra and the audience than in the desolation of the big hotel.

The orchestra was tuning. Kauffmann had not yet arrived, she found, opening the door a crack and peeping through. The house was bad. He would not like that.

She closed the door and sat down.

Then she got up and wandered about restlessly, but the place was too small for her. She could not stride as she desired, and she stopped dejectedly in the middle of the dressing-room.

And then, before she knew it, Kauffmann was there beside her. Her head was on his breast, his arms about her, and his eyes, warm with a look she had never seen in them before, were smiling peace and comfort into her own. His lips parted, and he murmured sweet, unstudied loving words that made the color surge to her face and her breath come quickly in little gasps. He smiled again and held her close and bent his head until his mouth touched hers. Her eyes closed, and she lay quite still, drinking in draughts of the great white peace that had come to her, feeling nothing but an unutterable satisfaction.

He raised his head and lifted her arms to his neck.

"I must go, sweet," he whispered, putting his arms round her again. "Tell me you love me, dear. Say 'I love you, Moritz.'"

She obeyed, half-mechanically. Kisses burned on her eyes and lips, and he was gone. She heard the applause when he appeared on the stage, the tap of his bâton, then the first notes of the "Spring Symphony" sounded and brought her to herself. She sank into a chair with her hands over her eyes.

He loved her! . . . For some time that was enough, and she sat still, feeling the wonderful knowledge beating in her pulses and burning in her cheeks. Then a great desire to see him swept over her, and she crept toward the wings, but her courage ebbed again and she went back to her chair. Restlessness took possession of her soon, however, and she threw her cloak about her and went out to the street, half-stifling for the fresh air. She would walk about and wait for the intermission, when he would come to her again.

When she went back she found that the intermission had come and gone. He had been there, for his handker-

chief lay on the floor, and she picked it up and patted and smoothed and folded it, and sat with her cheek against it, waiting the time for her song.

She was nervous and excited when at last it came. Never had she been less in the mood for singing, and she went on the stage with a sinking heart. It would be doubly dreadful to disgrace him now.

The sight of him in no way helped her. His face was cold, indifferent, expressionless, as of old. Her knees shook, and she clasped her hands nervously as she stood during the prelude.

The moment arrived, and she moved her lips. A sound came, but husky and tremulous, and she was on the point of breaking down altogether when she felt Kauffmann turn toward her. She raised her eyes to his, timidly, mechanically, having no hope.

But his face had changed. It was tender, loving, encouraging, and it lent her new life. With those eyes smiling into hers she felt capable of anything. The next note she struck was surer, the next better still. And so she sang on, inspired by the glowing eyes that held hers, until, the audience and the world forgotten, she sang as a bird sings, with the warmth and brightness of the sunshine and the sweetness of the flowers in the mellow notes, and behind and under and through it all the suggestion of a joy other than a bird's, sweeter, richer, more thrilling—the deeply human happiness of a loving woman.

The applause was tumultuous. People shouted and stamped and wept, and she sang for them again and again, radiant, exultant, until at last she could sing no more; and then she went back to the hotel in the carriage, hugging to her the rapturous knowledge of two things, the first, that she had found her love; the second, that with her love she had gained the power to sing.

Knowledge of this had come to Kauffmann in a flash of intuition when he entered the ante-room that evening, and he had acted on an im-

pulse, moved partly by curiosity, partly by the true musician's desire to make the most of a beautiful instrument. Lightly he laid his fingers on the strings that govern a woman's love, forgetting in the insouciance of unscathed youth the immutability of the rules in this great Game of Consequences that men play here below.

After that she lived for him and in him alone. Her very heart and soul were his. She gave him of her love royally, so absorbed in the giving that she never paused to question the quality of the love that he gave in return. It was enough for her that she was with him daily, that she had a part in his life and work, that he was good to her and caressed her. And indeed it would have been hard not to be good to one so bright and sweet and loving.

So discreet were they that the world never guessed that there was more than a professional acquaintance between them. People said that Nina lived wholly for her art, that the enraptured look in her face when she sang was caused by delight in the exercise of her powers. They did not know—so blind is the public at times—that as she stood before them, looking out across the house with the great eyes that glowed in her thin, dark face, that she saw them not. For her that sea of heads, that mass of living, expectant humanity, did not exist. She was conscious, keenly, burningly conscious, of the man who stood beside her at the conductor's stand. She never looked in his direction, not even to get the beat from his bâton, but every movement of his was known to her. Instinctively she followed his mood and gave her songs in accord; never hesitating, never faltering, seeing only with the eye of the spirit.

Night after night the audience rose from the seats and shouted and clapped their hands and heaped flowers at her feet. Night after night she came forward to the footlights and bowed and smiled that brilliant smile of hers, right and left, in appar-

ently grateful acknowledgment. But in truth these wildly moved men and women were as so many blocks of wood or stone to her. Their applause was only of value as it foretold Kauffmann's approbation. Apart from him they were naught in her eyes. She could have sung as well to an empty house, to a vault filled with mummies, if so be that he stood beside her and bade her sing.

When in May the tour came to an end and the orchestra was settled again in its Summer quarters Nina sang no more. The bi-weekly concerts took place out of doors, and Kauffmann said that he did not wish Nina to risk her voice in the night air.

After a few days in town he suggested that she and Mrs. Gillette go away for a time.

To tell the truth, he was weary of the clinging affection that Nina gave him. In the beginning he had made love to her quite heartlessly, convinced that she needed only happiness to make her a great singer, and was absorbed in the attempt to prove the truth of his theory. But whereas then, caring nothing for her, he had been perfectly indifferent to her possible suffering, he was now sufficiently fond of her to be assailed by pangs of conscience. A remorseful feeling that she was too good for him, that he was in no way worthy of her love, took possession of him, but instead of spurring him on to make himself more worthy, it irritated him, so that he desired to be free from her for a time. Only a time, he told himself, refusing—not daring, perhaps—to look forward on his course. He was sure that he meant to treat her well, for he really was very fond of her. Still, he did not look ahead.

There was another force at work within him—ambition.

When he made the first attempt to organize an orchestra the project was looked on by the musical world as an audacious, almost foolhardy, thing. And audacious it certainly was for a man of his youth and consequent inex-

perience to enter the lists against the recognized leaders in orchestral work, men whose years of endeavor had made the standard of performance a high one. He was warm-blooded and high-spirited, however, and enter the lists he did, with his youth and inexperience to hamper him, and with a passionate love of music and careful musical training for his only weapons.

And now after three years' work he had succeeded, had made his orchestra known as one of the first in the land and himself as a leader of ability, and he was slightly intoxicated by his achievements. The taste of success was good in his mouth, and he longed for more, longed to triumph socially as well as artistically and professionally.

Here Nina hampered him. She would not accept invitations.

"Some of the people bore me and some of them frighten me, and it does not seem worth while," she said, and from this he was unable to move her.

So he made his decision as to the course that was best for him to pursue, and proceeded as soon as might be to bring Nina to his way of thinking, or at least to bend her will to his.

"You need a change, Nina," he began.

"But I have had change all Winter, Moritz."

"I know, but I mean a different kind of change. This season has been a strain on your nervous system, and you need rest. What do you say to the seashore for a while, or to the mountains?"

"With you?"

"No, dear. You know I cannot get away. Mrs. Gillette will go with you."

"I would rather stay here."

"And I would rather have you go."

The glance of unutterable reproach that she gave him sent him striding up and down the room.

"Oh, Nina!" he cried, "don't make me seem such an ogre! Don't you see that I wish it for your good? You are worn out; you know you

are. And you can't rest here in this hot, noisy town. And as for being with me, you can't be very much, even if you stay. I have a lot of things to do this Summer, scores to rewrite, a half-dozen men to beat into shape, any number of things. And then I shall have to go out and meet people more or less, and you hate that. Nina, love—" he sank on one knee beside her—"let me arrange it for you; let me do as I think best. Think how you would feel if you could not sing next Winter!"

Her face changed, and he hastened to pursue his advantage.

"You would not like that, would you? And it is exactly what will happen. Your voice is not as good now as it was two weeks ago."

Tears filled her eyes.

"Not nearly so good. It is weaker, and you are not so sure of your high notes. It is growing more noticeable every day. Come, Nina, be sensible; let me judge for you. Ah, my dear little girl, don't you know that if I had my way we should be together always, and that it is only for yourself that I send you away?"

And so she let herself be persuaded, fearing the parting as she feared death, but unable to withstand him when he pleaded.

When the time came she clung to him desperately, longing but not daring to ask for a reprieve, and he, reading her longing in her eyes, kissed her and put her on the car.

She took the chair he found for her and lay back in it with her eyes closed, waiting for the train to start. If it would only go quickly while she had herself in hand! Kauffmann's talk with Mrs. Gillette and his parting injunctions to herself she only half-heard, and she even came to wish to have him leave her, so great was the strain of her effort for control.

And then when he did swing himself from the slowly moving train she started up wildly to call him back. She could not have him go! But it was too late, and she sank back again with closed eyes, struggling to be quiet, to be quiet—not to scream.

The place Kauffmann had chosen for her was charming, and with the help of his daily letters and his weekly visits she lived through three weeks there. When he came down on the third Saturday he looked at her approvingly.

"You are better, Nina. Isn't she, Mrs. Gillette? You begin to look more like yourself," and she glowed like a rose under his smile. It always amused him to see her blushes; there was something so naïve about them. In fact, all her manner with him was naïve. She wanted to please him, that was the beginning and end of her life, and she showed it with almost infantile simplicity.

Now a gleam of hope showed in her face.

"Then may I go home if I am so much better?" she ventured.

"We'll see, we'll see," he rejoined, hastily. "You are not well yet by any means. We'll see how you are when I come next Sunday."

But he did not come on the next Sunday, nor on the one after that. He was too busy, his notes said. Nina must be patient. It was not as if his reputation, his position in the world were assured. She must remember that in a sense he had his way yet to make. His tour the past Winter had been very successful, but he was young yet, and comparatively unknown, and there were many things that must be done, whether or no. He could not order his life according to his individual desires. She must not be too exacting. He would come when he could.

And Nina, alone in the mountains, waited through the weeks, filled meanwhile with a sick longing that grew with the passing days. She was not well and she needed him—ah, how she needed him!—for he was all the world to her, her very life.

At length she grew desperate, and leaving Mrs. Gillette, she went down to town by the night train, arriving in the early morning.

At ten o'clock she went to the hall where he held his rehearsals in the Summer. The orchestra was tuning

as she entered the building, and the familiar sounds made her feel suddenly young and gay again.

She ran lightly up the steps and through the corridor, checking herself at the end with a thought that came to her. She would not let Moritz see her at first; she would stand and watch him awhile before he knew. So she took up her position in the wings at the back of the stage, in such a way that she was in the shadow and still had a full view of the director's stand.

The stage before her was filled with the musicians. The great auditorium was empty, chill, gray and forbidding, as such places always are in the light of the morning. The only spot of color was in one of the proscenium boxes to the right. There two women sat, one elderly, black-gowned, negative; the other young, well favored, glowing like a rose in the somberness of the box.

Her gown, of some fine, flowered Summer stuff, was made over silk of a contrasting color that rustled when she moved. The front of the bodice was a mass of dainty *lingerie*, edged and ruffled with yards of finest lace. Her hat was heaped with heavy black ostrich plumes. As she sat back in her chair, doing nothing, one felt instinctively that she was by nature and training of the class that commands.

Nina glanced at her indifferently. What were women, even gorgeously attired women, to her? Her whole being was quiescent; she was waiting.

She did not wait long. Kauffmann entered the box, spoke a moment with the ladies sitting there, and then came on the stage. A word to the violins to his left, a warning to the 'cellists before him, and he raised his bâton.

To Nina, crouching in the wings, music-starved, heart-hungry, it seemed a taste of heaven. To see him, though he knew it not, to feast her eyes on his face, to drink in the music—*his* music—what did it not mean to her! Once a chill doubt of his reception of her crossed her mind, but it vanished

again. He could not be anything but kind.

Of weariness she did not think. While the music went on she could not be tired. But with the end of that the end of her strength came also, and she looked round for a chair. None was to be found, however, and she came back to her old position in the wings.

Kauffmann was in the box now, talking absorbedly with the ladies there, with the younger one especially, and as Nina watched them, his air of deference, her graciousness and evident pleasure in his admiration, the iron of jealousy entered her soul. What was she that Moritz should care for her when women like this—beautiful, brilliantly dressed—courted his attention?

She covered her face with her hands to shut out the sight. When she looked again Kauffmann and the ladies were crossing the stage, were already close to her. A foolish terror seized her, and she stood shrinking against the wall, gazing at them with a sort of fascination.

To Kauffmann the unexpected sight of her came almost with a shock, and he stopped in the middle of a sentence. It annoyed him that she should look so ill; it annoyed him that she should get any idea of this flirtation with Mrs. Hoynes-Robinson, the leader of rather a fast set. But the thing that he resented perhaps the most was the fact that she had come to town without his permission. His first impulse was to pass her and come back later, but Mrs. Hoynes-Robinson stopped with an exclamation:

"Oh, is not this Miss Sherard? May we not meet her? Please introduce us, Mr. Kauffmann."

And he was forced to come forward and perform the introduction. He did it in a markedly perfunctory way, and Nina, knowing so well the different shades of his manner, glanced at him timidly. Mrs. Hoynes-Robinson made several gracious remarks and swept on, taking Kauffmann and her companion with her.

Nina stood where they left her, lis-

tening to their retreating footsteps. At the outer door they stopped, and she heard their voices for a moment. Then Kauffmann came back alone. She turned to meet him.

There were still traces of annoyance on his face.

"What under the sun does this mean, Nina?" he cried.

She went to him, smiling.

"I wanted to see you," she said, quite simply, as if that were enough.

"That is nonsense. I should have come to you."

"But you didn't," she reminded him, still smiling.

"I should have come when I could, you know that; and in the meantime it is not convenient for me to have you here. I have engagements for every hour in the day, not a moment to call my own—or to give to you. I really don't see what good this is going to do you."

"Haven't you even a moment now?"

"Not one."

"Moritz, are you very angry with me?" she pleaded.

"Not angry, no, but seriously displeased. You really might have had more regard for my wishes, Nina."

She stood before him like a culprit. Then she ventured to plead her cause.

"But I wanted to see you so much, Moritz, and I thought it wouldn't make any difference if I came down for a day—just one day, Moritz!"

"For heaven's sake, don't be so abject, Nina," he cried, in sudden rancor. "I don't care whether you come down or not—suit yourself, only I haven't any time to give you."

She was like a stone facing him. Then her lips unclosed.

"You don't care for me any more!" she said.

"What nonsense!" he cried. "I am just as fond of you as I ever was. You are unreasonable. You do not seem to understand that a man's life is not like a woman's, that he cannot be making love all the time. There are other things for him to do; he has to get out and fight and work and make his way."

His words went by her like the wind. She only heard the tone.

"You don't care for me!" she said again.

"I do," he protested.

"You don't care for me!" she reiterated, dully. "I wonder if you ever will again."

His patience went at loose ends.

"I tell you once for all, Nina," he said, incisively, "that I care for you now as much as I have ever done; and that's a lot more than I did in the beginning," he added with an afterthought, half to himself.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean—well, I mean that I did not care much about you in the beginning."

He was looking at his watch. It was past the time for his appointment. He looked up after a minute, as she did not speak. She was staring straight before her. He could see that she was suffering.

Presently she turned to him.

"Why did you do it?" she asked, sharply.

He cursed himself inwardly for saying that one thing. No matter how true it was nor how much she tried him, there was no need for her to know that. He tried an evasion, but she set it aside.

"Why did you do it?" she repeated.

He braced himself against the wall and spoke, keeping his eyes on her face.

"I don't know that I had any motive at the time, except that you looked very little and lonely and brown," he said, speaking rapidly. "And then—yes, I did have a theory, a sort of feeling that if you were happy, if your nature were satisfied, so far as your craving for affection was concerned, you would sing magnificently. And you did," he added, triumphantly.

"Then it was all a sham," she said.

"But I grew to care for you afterward, Nina," he cried, the quick sympathetic side of his artistic nature roused by her evident suffering. He had been selfishly blind to her possi-

ble pain when she was not with him, had put from him in the stress of his ambition the thought that she might suffer. But now, with her here before him, repentance followed swiftly on the blow, and he longed to take it back.

"It was all a sham," she said again, bitterly, "all a sham, and I let myself be deluded, be made a fool—a tool! Don't—don't touch me!" she cried, warding him off with outstretched palms. "Not that—now. You need not pretend any longer! You have hurt me as much as you can; don't try to soften it with more make-believes!"

"Nina!" he cried. "Nina, listen to me, dear!"

"Hush," she said, solemnly, "don't tell another lie. I have heard enough for one while. I will go now."

Her hands dropped wearily to her sides and she turned from him toward the door. He put out an arm to detain her, but she shook her head, and he let her go.

Unsteadily she made her way between the wings. After a few steps she turned and came swiftly back to him.

He caught her outstretched hands and drew her into his arms, all the passion of his nature responding to her kiss.

"Nina," he whispered, "sweet-heart, forgive me!"

"Good-bye," she whispered, softly; "good-bye. Hush! I will come back, but not now. Good-bye, dear, good-bye!"

She took his face between her hands and he felt her lips on his eyes and mouth, and then—he was alone.

He stood a moment bewildered, and when at length he reached the door she had gone, had passed out of sight in the crowded street.

Long he sought for her, all Summer long, quietly, since he knew that publicity would hurt her more than all else, but he did not find her, because it did not occur to him to look in the suburb where he himself lived.

His passionate desire for her grew

greater with his regret and the uncertainty and delay, and when Winter came and the orchestra started on the work of the regular season, it seemed to him that he could not go on without her.

To have any other woman singing beside him, going through the rehearsals with him, would be insupportable, and he tried to get a man for the position. Circumstances were against him, however, and a heavy young woman with a blonde head and a big, expressionless voice came to take the place of his little Nina—Nina, with her fine, dark face and sensitive alertness to interpret his mood.

Success was his in a measure, for all society was open to him. There was no house in the most exclusive circles of the city where his presence was not desired and sought; matrons sat at his feet and drank in his words; maidens maneuvered for a glance of his eye, a touch of his hand.

But after a time people began to say that the work of the orchestra did not improve, the young conductor was not fulfilling his promise, and whispers and rumors of all sorts went about. But none came near the truth, that this same young conductor had had the best and lost it, and that the knowledge was eating his heart out.

December went by and part of January, and the time had come for the orchestra's Spring tour. The date for the last town concert was set, and seats went at a premium, for this was a society event, one of the last before the sobriety of the Lenten season.

Everything was in readiness, even to the decoration of the Music Hall with flowers and palms, when the soloist sent word that she could not sing, that she had succumbed to an attack of tonsillitis.

Kauffmann scoured the town in the vain attempt to find a substitute; coming home at last, dead tired, with the intention of putting in his leading violinist for a solo.

After a hasty dinner and toilette he drove to the hall. The house was full, the orchestra in readiness, and he went directly on the stage. His intention was to announce the change in the program only when the time for the solo came.

The concert went off sufficiently well, although it seemed to two or three close observers that the directing was more or less perfunctory. As a matter of fact, it had occurred to Kauffmann that it was just a year ago, in the last concert before the Spring tour, that Nina had sung for him first, and that thought combined with physical weariness to send his mind away in vague weavings of dreams and memories, some connected with Nina, some not; so that afterward, when he tried to bring back some knowledge of this concert, he could recall nothing save that the link in one of his sleeves was loose and rattled against the stiff cuff as he moved his arm.

In the intermission he went downstairs to get some water, of which he drank two or three glasses. Then he returned to the stage.

As he stepped from the stand after the string quartette in the second half, a note was brought to him, half a dozen words scrawled on a scrap of paper:

Make no announcement. I will sing.
NINA.

He crushed it in his hand and strode across the platform between the violins. Before he reached the door it opened, and Nina came through it toward him.

Her gown was black, low-necked, without a touch of color, without flower or ribbon or gem. A soft, fluffy scarf lay loosely about her shoulders and fell far down in front, hiding her neck in part. She was thin, much thinner than he had ever seen her, so thin that her eyes looked out from her face almost unearthly in their size and brilliance.

Her lips were a scarlet line, in her cheeks a riotous color burned.

He made a motion to take her back

to the ante-room, but she set it aside with a wistful smile at him.

"I will sing," she said; "'Samson and Delilah.' The men know it. Tell them."

"Don't do it, Nina. Let me take you back," he implored.

"I will sing. Tell the men," she repeated, and he led her forward mechanically.

She bowed slightly in response to the applause that greeted her, then stood waiting for the prelude. Kauffmann turned to her once, but her eyes compelled him, and he raised his bâton.

When she began, her voice, though clear, was far from strong, and to the man who watched her in an agony of apprehension it seemed that she herself was too weak and frail to carry the song to the end.

Once she faltered, and he forgot to beat the time as he watched her. But she caught herself and went on, and from that time strength seemed to come to her, and to the end she sang with all her old sweetness and finish and fire.

When it was over the audience rose to her just as in the old days, shouting, applauding, heaping flowers at her feet; and she stood before them, worn to the point of emaciation, smiling her old, brilliant smile to right and left, while her eyes burned and that hot, feverish color blazed in her cheeks.

Kauffmann bent toward her.

"That is enough, Nina. Let me take you away."

But the spirit that was in her would not let it be enough. She waved him back.

"'Butterflies!' They know that, too," she answered. Her breath came in a gasp at the end, but she smiled at him once more compellingly, and once more he raised his bâton.

It seemed impossible that she should sing this sparkling, airy thing. This surely was beyond the power even of her will. But sing it she did, gaily, lightly, sweetly, with all the old verve and abandon.

And again the audience rose.

She bowed, but only once, and the smile on her lips faltered and faded as she turned to Kauffmann. His bâton fell with a rattle that passed unnoticed in the tumult, and he caught her hands and half-led, half-carried her from the stage.

Deceived in part by her brilliant color and her spirit, blinded for the rest by its own enthusiasm, the audience stormed and shouted madly for a space, but she did not come back to satisfy its demands.

Behind the closed doors of a little ante-room a man was in distress for the woman he loved.

She lay against his knee on the floor, with his arm round her. Her color was gone, she was pinched and haggard now, and she gasped for breath. Presently she opened her eyes and looked up at him, trying to smile.

"We—roused them, didn't we, dear? We always—could—rouse them—together—you—and I."

The panting, broken sentences stopped. He waited for her to gather strength, watching the wan shadows of her old smile flicker over her face—her dear, dear face, so wan and thin!

"You have been ill, Nina?"

Her eyelids fluttered.

"Not ill; hungry!" she whispered.

"Hungry?" He was aghast.

"Not for food. I had that—generally. I taught. It was my heart—that was hungry."

"Your heart, Nina?"

"I wanted you," faintly, "and so my heart was hungry, and—do I look so bad?"

The anxious eyes sought his. He raised her hand to his lips. An instant the fingers closed on his, and then she tried to rise. He held her.

"I must go!"

"No, dear, no! lie still!"

"I must go! I must go!" she repeated, feverishly. "I did not come to stay, only to sing. I must go back."

Still he held her closely, striving for words to tell his need of her.

"See, Nina," he said, desperately,

"see, dear! If you have been heart-hungry, have I been less so? You left me, dear, when I had only begun to know how much I loved you, and all these weary months I have worked without you, needing you and loving you and searching for you always. I was cruel and wicked, but I have suffered for it. Is my punishment not yet enough?"

She turned on him a face shining with sorrow. Soft, pitying fingers touched his cheek, but something aloof, far-off in her look chilled his veins. Tender it was, yes, but with

the tenderness of an angel at cool heights above the sorrow of this world. Was she then so near heaven and the love eternal that she had no need of the warm, human love of man? Was her heart no longer hungry for him?

He crushed her hand in his.

"Nina!" he cried, despairingly, "Nina! Nina!"

The old love-light flared up in her eyes. With an effort she raised herself, and he knew as he met her kiss that she was no angel, but a woman, all a woman, and his.



CHARM

IT dwells beneath a Circe's baleful glance,
Or looks out calmly from Madonna eyes,
A gift apart, to thrill, inspire, entrance,
A wondrous spirit, clothed in different guise.

Its presence or in man or woman found
Means power to win us, though we know not why;
A tone, a smile, a thing that holds us bound,
A spell to drag us down or lift us high.

A. R. MORGAN DAHLGRÉN.



JUST LIKE A WIDOWER

LITTLE CLARENCE—Pa, when Lot's wife was turned to salt what did he do?

MR. CALLIPERS—Began to look for a fresh one, I presume.



AT THE FIRESIDE

FORTH from the coals a rosy rhythm runs;
Hark! how the flames unfold
The vows and dreams of unremembered suns
To vanished forests told!

MARY T. WAGGAMAN.

SCRUPLE

THOU art still climbing to the rosy summit,
 Where hope and fame yet beckon thee at will,
 While I descend into the flood, where plummet
 Shall touch the sounding of no mortal skill.

My feet already pause where darkly closes
 The somber wave of suffering and of gloom.
 Does not thy hand that in my hand reposes
 Shrink at the shiver of impending doom?

Capricious one! thou who with soft caresses
 Wouldst bid me linger by thy side to-day,
 Lure back my youth, laugh at my past distresses,
 Wilful and wayward as a child at play,

What wild, strange dream is thine, thou artless angel?
 What golden cup unto my lip wilt bring,
 Thou new Aurora, preaching new evangel,
 To make thy Tithonus a god and king?

What thirst is thine for sacrificial altars?
 What heaven-born instinct to console and charm?
 Canst thou not see how my faint spirit falters
 Lest it should yield and dare to do thee harm?

Ah, tempt me not, half sorceress and half woman
 And all a child in thy unconscious grace;
 Ah, tempt me not, for sorrow leaves us human,
 And he grows young who gazes on thy face.

Thou hast not reached the sunlight on the mountains,
 Whose radiant heights are calling to thy haste,
 Where thou shalt drink from those immortal fountains
 That I have quaffed and found of bitter taste.

It is not meet that I should tell the story
 That blasts the heart and bids its pulses cease.
 For thee the stars still clothe the night with glory,
 While all I ask—its silence and its peace.

JULIEN GORDON.



CONNUBIAL CONGRATULATIONS

BENHAM—I believe in a personal devil.
 MRS. BENHAM—Well, I'm glad you have one friend.

THE PICTURE OF HER

By Zoe Anderson-Norris

IN the first place there was a snow-storm. Not that I minded that. I loved it. It was the first real snowstorm I had seen for two long years. But to be out in it all afternoon!

In the second place the day had been filled not only with snow but with editors and publishers and with elevators that went up when you wanted them to go down and down when you wanted them to go up; with street car drivers in an oily cloth garb of the submarine sort and who had fishy goggle eyes that frightened; and with the rush and the whirl and the jam of the street.

I was tired—dead tired.

I got off at Eighty-first street and went to their apartment. They had been my good friends two years before, and I wanted to see them both. She would comfort me by her tall, white presence and he, the nimble witted, would give me advice.

He was a lawyer. I had telephoned to him from some office or other, and the reply had been that he had gone home for the night two hours before.

So I felt certain of finding him.

There is nothing certain in this world—particularly in relation to a man.

The outer door clicked in answer to my ring. I ran up-stairs. She met me at the door of her apartment, tall, white, serene as ever. Two children who had inherited her fairness clung to her skirts. The boy, running to me, flung chubby arms about my neck. They ushered me into the warmth of the room, turned on the lights and helped me shake off the snow.

"I wanted to see you," I told her, "and him. There are a thousand things I want to ask him about."

She walked to the window and looked out.

"He ought to be here now," she said. "He promised to come. He has an engagement for to-morrow night and the night after. He said he would be certain to come home to-night."

"For to-morrow night and the night after?" I repeated, removing my hat and flicking off the flakes of snow. "A man-about-town he is now, I suppose, and popular?"

"Very. He has many cases. He was to see a young woman this afternoon for whom he is getting a divorce. That's where he is now. How prettily your hair is done! Where did you learn to do it?—in Paris?"

"Yes. Are they as much the fad as ever in New York—divorces?"

"Quite."

"In my opinion the American men are the best men in the world," I remarked. "The further I go the more I think so. Why in the name of common sense do the women get so many divorces?"

"You can search me," said she.

She brought me warm slippers, she placed my shoes on the heater, where they would burn to a crisp, she gave me hot wine to drink, then she left for the dining-room to interview the maids.

I stretched out on the couch with a magazine. Soon it fell to the floor. What with the wine, the heat, the comfort of the room, I dozed. But not for long. Small footsteps crossed the floor. I was rudely wakened by

the pounding of small fists. The boy's father had taught him to fight. The fists hurt.

"Help! help!" I screamed. "I'm being murdered in cold blood. Help!"

The mother rushed to my rescue. She chased the boy into a corner, where he took refuge behind a giant chair, peeping rebelliously out and laughing.

"Of course you'll stay to dinner," said she.

"If you insist," said I.

Going to the window she again looked out.

"He'll be certain to come home in time for dinner," she assured me. "If he doesn't he'll be home directly after. He promised me."

It was a joyful dinner. The white table, reflected by a dozen mirrors; the dainty viands, the daintier maids, the flaxen head of the hostess high and proud and beautiful, the children, who had had their dinner first, toddling near, the girl's head on a level with the table, the boy's a little above. Indeed, it was a jolly dinner.

"If Jack doesn't come in time to see you," his wife declared, "he'll be very sorry."

"Perhaps. He used to be very kind to me, he and you, too, but that was two years ago. Two years make changes. In all probability he has forgotten me by now."

"No, no! He was talking of you only last week. He has not forgotten you. He has changed very little. And yet I don't know, either. In some ways he has. He doesn't come home so much. But then he has a large practice. You can't expect him to be always hanging round home."

"Even if you did expect it, what's the use? Blessed is she that expects nothing, for she shall not be disappointed."

"Old, but true."

"There's nothing new under the sun. But see here. That's one thing I liked about the Englishmen. They stayed at home. Really, every night and often of afternoons they hung round home."

"Were their wives there?"

"To tell the truth, those I knew hadn't any wives. They were in the same hotel. I got to know them there incidentally."

"If they had had wives at the hotel they wouldn't have been there," she argued, with convincing emphasis.

"Maybe. Men are contrary animals. When they think you want them they won't stay; and when you don't want them wild horses couldn't pull them away. At any rate, it's a peculiarity of American men, this always having to go down-town to see a man."

"There's one thing—Jack never told me this was a man. He told me very candidly she was a woman."

"Who, which, what?" I asked, bewildered.

"The one for whom he is getting the divorce," she replied. "It was perfectly natural, wasn't it, for him to take her out to dinner? He must be polite to his patrons. He is bound to be, or somebody else will get them. Then where would our income go?"

"Up the flume. My! my! It must be interesting, this thing of getting divorces for pretty women."

The boy peered longingly at the cake plate. I fed him surreptitiously when the mother wasn't looking. When the dinner was over I grasped him and bore him screaming to the drawing-room again.

While I found the letters for his name in a box of enormous blocks his mother pressed her face against the window pane.

"It has almost stopped snowing," she murmured; "the flakes are the tiniest. I can see them between the corner lights and here. He'll be home in a few minutes now."

"Don't you worry," said I.

She turned to me with a slight frown.

"I'm not worrying for myself," she averred, quickly, "it's for you. I thought you wanted to see him, that's all."

"Then stop worrying altogether," I advised. "I am happy as a clam if he never comes. Did you say you liked the way I did my hair? Get the

brush and comb; I'll show you. It's the simplest thing in the world."

She vanished and returned with brush and comb and a large white apron that she tied about my waist. She took a seat in a backless chair and I proceeded to brush out her long, fair hair.

It was beautiful hair, thick, wavy. When I let it drop it reached to the floor. I coiled the front braids into rolls and fastened them in the French fashion on her temples.

"Do you want a little curl like mine," I asked, "right in the middle of your forehead?"

"Yes," she answered, and I made it.

Then I combed out the rest. I laid the comb on the chair. The baby took it and ran. I held the hair, laughing. The baby ran still farther away. The hair was so long that, clinging to the extreme end of it, I was able to make a large circle and run after. At length I caught the little rogue and the comb, and finished my task.

My friend rose and gazed on the effect. She took a hand mirror and turned her head critically this way and that.

"I like it," she smiled, and added, after a moment: "She has dark hair."

"She? Who?"

"The divorcée."

"They always like a change," I comforted.

"Do you know," she branched off, facing the children, "that it's time all little folks were in the land of Nod?"

They made a mad rush for each other. The boy clasped his arms round the girl. They stood defiantly united.

"We won't go," they stormed, "till we've had a piece of cake."

She threw out her arms.

"What's this?" she exclaimed, despairingly; "a strike?"

"Compromise," suggested I, "on a piece of bread and butter." And this they did.

The room was quiet for a while. A

long way down the hall I heard her crooning to them. Now and again a cry of insubordination interrupted the crooning. Then all was still once more.

I ensconced myself in a big rocker and thought of nothing much, half-dreaming.

By-and-bye she tiptoed in.

"Don't breathe," she whispered; "they are asleep."

She tiptoed to the mantel, took down a photograph, looked at it and turned it to me. "This," she explained, "is the picture of her."

"Of whom?" I inquired, forgetting.

"Of the divorcée, with whom he is taking dinner."

"Who? Jack?"

"Yes; Jack."

I took the picture and examined it. It was beautiful, rather, but theatrical. The head was directed skyward and so were the eyes. The shoulders were fine and well exposed. A strap was across one. The drapery fell negligently away from the other.

"A pretty woman," I decided.

"I have never seen her, but several who have say the photograph is exaggerated. She is not half so pretty, they say."

"Is it the fashion? Do they always present their photographs, these little divorcées?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. She presented hers. Do you think she looks neglected, browbeaten, badly treated?"

"Hardly. Is it she who is getting the divorce, or the husband? There is a difference, you know."

"It is she."

"Do you believe in divorce?"

"Sometimes I do, and then again I don't. It seems a pity. Where there are children it is terrible. Often they are all that keep a man and a woman together, the children. Hush! did I hear the boy crying? . . . No, it was only the wind."

"Once," I began, "I heard a man talking about his life—it is to the widows that these men tell the story of their lives—and he said: 'For five

years—I married when I was an infant—I lived the life of a saint. And then I woke up. After that, if I missed anything I don't know it. My wife,' he went on, 'was a sensible little woman. Though she knew all she said nothing, she did nothing. She just sawed wood.'

"And what did you say to that?"

"I said: 'Poor little woman!'"

"Then what did he say?"

"There didn't seem to be anything left for him to say. He looked at me. After a long time, when I thought he had forgotten, he said: 'You've been around a good deal; but after all, you're nothing but a great big child.'"

"Do you believe," she queried, presently, "in a woman's saying nothing and sawing wood?"

"Not much. We had a discussion about that on shipboard coming over. It was the captain who started it. 'The most sensible woman I know,' said he, 'is the wife of the ship's doctor. I'll tell you what she did. It was all about a barmaid. In New York they rig out their bars with lights and shining glasses and everything to make them brilliant and attractive; but in England they do the thing differently. They don't pay any attention at all to lights and glasses and mirrors. They get a barmaid—the prettiest girl they can find in all the country round. She's better than any lights and glasses and mirrors. The men swarm round her thicker than flies in the Summer time. Well, the ship's doctor swarmed with the rest. He overdid the thing, in fact. Some woman on board got to hear of it. What must this woman do but go straight back and break it to the wife. The wife gave her the cold shoulder, I can tell you that. "My husband takes good care of me," says she. "He furnishes me this beautiful home and a horse and carriage and everything I want in the way of dress, and that being the case, I've got nothing at all to do with what he does in England." Sensible woman, that.'"

She rested her chin in her hands, her eyes on the picture.

"I can't help thinking," she reflected, "that it's a strange way to feel, a strange thing to say. My soul goes against it."

I got up and walked toward the window, stepping carefully on flowers going and on green leaves coming back.

"So does the soul of every loving woman that lives," said I, "who accepts humiliation for the price of food and clothing, degradation for her salt!"

I stopped and stared at the picture, as she was doing.

"I would take in mopping first," I decided, "or washing and ironing. I would paint barbed-wire fences or shovel fog off roofs, or carry smoke. If I couldn't make a living I would starve."

She thought aloud:

"Men will never understand the humiliation of the second-hand kiss," said she.

And she was right. They never will.

I rescued my shoes from the heater. They were about to burn. I put them on, hot as they were.

"I must go," said I. "It is late."

For the fifth time she went to the window.

"I wish you wouldn't go," she entreated. "How can you go so late, all by yourself? The goblins'll git ye."

"No. I shall take a car at the corner and transfer sixteen times, and in three hours I'll be home. That's New York. I'm not afraid."

"It's awful to be a widow and have to go about alone!"

"There are worse things," I replied, tying on my hat. "At any rate, a widow knows where her husband is of nights."

She helped me with my wraps, fastening them with her slender white hands. She stood at the head of the steps while I gave her a French kiss on both cool white cheeks.

Then I went down into the dark hall and out.

In the street I looked up at the window of the room where she sat with her picture while he sat with *her*, and sighed.

LA DEMANDE

Par François de Nion

C E jardin était une merveille du printemps; comme il se nuancait de lilas en grappes et d'arbres en fleurs, le soleil et la brise, en variant les lumières sur les couleurs, y faisaient des mélanges de tons d'une délicatesse infinie et charmante; des parfums tendres se balançaient, en suspens dans l'air, avec une douceur extrême; les bruits étaient épars, menus, délicieux, fragiles, d'accord avec les clartés et les baumes.

Jean de Gacé, en ouvrant la porte, sentit ce bonheur venir à lui en bouffée. Du seuil, il conquît l'étendue verte, rose, la forme svelte des arbres, l'arrangement fuyant des allées, la brume légère et moirée montant des parterres; son cœur s'ouvrit et ses traits se haussèrent; il salua, d'un sourire, le paradis.

La blancheur d'une jupe anima le détour du petit bois; cette jupe ondulait d'un mouvement rapide et doux, glissait avec un bruit frais d'empepage; il reconnut l'ombrelle, le corsage rose, le piqué de la robe, les souliers fauves modelant les fins pieds danseurs et, comme l'ombrelle se détournait, d'un geste d'envol, le visage naquit, se peignit à ses yeux dans sa grâce et sa beauté.

M. de Gacé se sentit plus heureux et plus jeune; ses quarante-cinq ans ne pesaient jamais sur lui, parce qu'une existence hardie de lutteur habile et heureux ne lui avait pas permis de se regarder vivre et de se sentir vieillir. Il s'était marié très jeune, par amour, avait perdu brusquement sa femme, après la naissance d'un fils et soumis, dès lors, par besoin d'oubli, aux jeux, aux angoisses et aux fortunes d'un éleveur de che-

vaux faisant courir, il s'était à peine aperçu du temps. Ni ses cheveux châtain, ni sa moustache plus claire, longue et tombante, n'avaient de fils blancs et sa démarche était aisée et prompte, exercée et réglée par les sports.

Mais depuis un an, depuis l'arrivée des Mainfroy dans sa province, près de son haras, il se renouvelait encore; à peine s'il s'était aperçu que son fils Robert était parti pour le Japon, comme attaché, et que Miss Maud, sa pouliche préparée pour les *Oaks*, était tombée boîteuse. Il était seulement occupé de cette pensée cultivée avec soin, avec passion, qu'il était amoureux d'Hélène Mainfroy et qu'on la lui donnerait peut-être, s'il la demandait.

Elle jeta de loin:

"J'ai été, ce matin, voir les chevaux courir; Norfolk est superbe."

Il fut ravi, non du compliment sur son cheval, mais de l'éclat de ses dents et de la joie de son sourire; il la regardait minutieusement, détails à détails, comme on mire et l'on admire un bibelot d'art et de préciosité, touché de la trouver belle, tellement reconnaissant qu'elle sût si bien plaire et si bien se faire aimer.

Cependant, il comprenait qu'il fallait parler, car elle le regardait avec des yeux amusés, consciente de l'émouvoir et flattée. M. de Gacé demanda:

"Monsieur votre père est là?"

"Oui; il fait ses comptes dans le kiosque. J'ai entendu la sonnette, j'ai pensé que c'était vous et j'ai été à votre rencontre."

"Comme vous êtes gentille! Devinez qui m'est tombé, hier, du ciel

... ou plutôt non, de l'autre monde?"

"De l'autre monde?"

"Oui; Robert, mon diplomate; je ne l'attendais que dans un mois, il a brûlé les étapes et il arrive sans même m'envoyer une dépêche. C'est tout simple pour lui de revenir du Japon."

"Je serai bien contente de le connaître."

"Je vous demanderai la permission de vous l'amener demain."

Il se tut un moment, pour donner plus de valeur à sa phrase, puis, avec un peu de tremblement dans la voix, mais posément, détachant les mots, et les regards pointés vers la terre, il débita:

"Robert va être nommé 'troisième'; sa carrière se dessine, il n'a plus qu'à se laisser aller; il était parti un peu enfant; maintenant, c'est tout à fait un homme; je peux ne plus m'occuper de lui. Cela m'a décidé à faire auprès de monsieur votre père une démarche que je lui ai, d'ailleurs, laissé prévoir—"

Malgré lui, il releva les paupières pour voir l'effet de son discours: elle était immobile et toute rouge. Sa petite main tremblait sur le manche de son ombrelle, dont la pointe creusait le sol.

Il avait envie de prendre cette main, de lui dire qu'il l'aimait, de lui demander si elle voulait bien être sa femme. Il eut l'instinct que cette minute était unique et divine. Il eût osé, un peu plus jeune; mais certains âges ont des pudeurs. Il se tut, comme s'il avait eu vingt ans, frémissant et timide.

Elle dit, très simple, avec l'habileté imperturbable des vierges:

"Vous savez que nous sommes toujours tous heureux de vous voir."

"Alors, à demain. Je ne veux pas déranger monsieur votre père."

"Vous vous sauvez déjà! On ne vous voit plus."

"Comme vous êtes gentille!"

Oui, elle était gentille, et bonne, et charmante. M. de Gacé se répétait cela en suivant un vieux chemin

d'ormes, au bout duquel un homme l'attendait, tenant un cheval en main. Par un soin un peu naïf, il s'exerçait à fortifier, à assurer son amour; il se la montrait toujours prête à accourir vers lui, il se rappelait ses sourires et ses poignées de main légères. . . . "Mais, si ce n'était que de la sympathie pour un vieil ami, pour un voisin élégant et aimable? Non, elle avait rougi tout à l'heure, elle avait bien compris le sens de ses paroles et elle lui avait dit: 'À demain.' D'ailleurs, il avait pu pressentir M. Mainfroy; il le savait sans fortune, hanté d'idées nobiliaires, préoccupé de marier sa fille. . . . Peut-être, le père avait-il parlé? . . ."

Il s'arrêta, enfonça son talon dans une motte glaiseuse:

"Et si elle ne m'épouse que parce que je suis riche, que je suis le baron de Gacé! . . ."

L'idée—naturelle pourtant—fut si pénible à son exaltation, que le ciel, une seconde, tourna, chavira sur la plaine. Il sentit son cœur remuer au fond de sa poitrine, se fondre en pleurs brusquement montés à ses yeux. Il secoua ses pensées, s'approcha du cheval, s'enleva d'un élan souple et partit au galop sur la route sonore.

Comme il s'embarquait, emporté de haute allure, dans l'avenue du haras—entre les pelouses limitées de balustrades blanches où les juments dressaient leurs têtes fines suivies de poulains têtes et dégingandés—il vit devant lui Robert qui rentrait, penché sur le guidon de sa bicyclette.

Le père approcha la jambe et rendit la main; les bonds du pur-sang s'espacèrent; en trois foulées il avait rejoint son fils.

Et du haut de sa monture élancée, laissant tomber des yeux malgré lui dédaigneux sur le bicycliste, il pensa, réveil tardif pour sa paternité tendre, de jalousie et de suprématie masculine:

"En somme, je suis mieux que lui."

Comme ils pénétraient tous deux dans le salon des Mainfroy, ils

surprirent Hélène occupée à poser des fleurs parmi les vases. Elle ne les attendait pas encore et n'avait pas entendu la voiture; la jeune fille était en peignoir, les bras nus et les cheveux relevés d'un ruban; sa vue fut délicieuse aux deux hommes.

"Mon Dieu, je me sauve!"

"Laissez-moi, au vol, vous présenter mon fils et vous demander pardon de notre irruption."

Après avoir rougi beaucoup, elle était toute blanche; pourtant, sans fausse honte, elle relevait les yeux vers ceux du jeune homme. Leurs regards s'échangèrent et s'amollirent. Elle ferma la porte et disparut.

Robert s'écriait:

"Mon Dieu! qu'elle est charmante et jolie!"

"Tu trouves?"

"Je comprends ce que vous me laissez entendre tout à l'heure, mon cher papa; je vous assure que, si cette jeune fille vous plaît, comme je le vois, je suis tout disposé à donner

suite à vos projets. . . . Mais voilà, voudra-t-elle aller à l'étranger? Dans ma carrière"

M. Mainfroy entraînait, les mains tendues.

"Ma fille m'a parlé, cher baron, j'ai tout compris; vous connaissez l'affection filiale qu'elle a pour vous; je sais tout ce que vaut monsieur votre fils; nous parlons franchement, n'est-ce pas? Il faut attendre un peu pour voir si les jeunes gens se conviennent, et puis"

M. de Gacé regarda son fils, dont les yeux brillaient, et, sans un pli aux lèvres, sentit s'achever l'agonie de son cœur.

"Je vous remercie, cher monsieur," dit-il, "de vos bons sentiments pour Robert. Permettez-lui de venir ici faire sa cour tous les jours; j'espère qu'ils se plairont. Robert est un bon garçon"

Il ajouta, très simplement:

"Et Mlle. Hélène est une adorable jeune fille."



À LA MODE

MY Polly glories in each smile
That fashion on attire bestows,
And flies to each extreme of style
In coiffure, dress and even pose.

The fairy folk in times of old
Were changed by Magic's wondrous wand;
She for new guises manifold
Adopts each model in *Le Monde*.

So though my very age bespeaks
Discretion, yet my staid brain whirls—
I think that in as many weeks
I've been engaged to fifteen girls!

ANNETTE SCHUYLER HARRISON.



AN UNKIND INFERENCE

FLORA—When Jack asked for just one kiss I ran out.
BESSIE—What of?—kisses?

TWO PROBLEMS

I WONDER, love, were you and I
 Alone upon the dreary earth,
 With not another suitor nigh
 To break the awful manless dearth—
 I wonder if you then would be
 Inclined to listen to my plea.

I wonder, too, if I should find
 Myself in some strange, distant land,
 Inhabited by womankind,
 With not another man at hand—
 I wonder, would I prove untrue
 One moment in my thought to you.

W. W. WHITELOCK.



MERELY A FRIENDLY FAVOR

“SAY, old chap, got anything particular on hand for this afternoon?”
 “No; nothing I can’t drop if there’s any excitement in sight.”
 “Well, there is. Yes, I think I can safely say that you won’t stagnate.”
 “Good! What’s up?”
 “I want you to help me propose to Miss Lovelton.”
 “The deuce you do!”
 “Exactly. Will you?”
 “Why—why, I don’t know. How?”
 “Well, you know that pet bull terrier she always has with her? Yes? Well, he hates me, for some reason, and if I should venture even to touch her he’d be at my calves in a holy second. Now how can a fellow propose properly to a girl without taking her hand, or slipping his arm round her? And when she accepts me, if I forget about that blasted pup in the ardor of the moment, I shudder at the consequences.”
 “I see. But where do I come in?”
 “Why, he hates tramps, too. So I want you to rig up as one and get him to chase you, say anywhere from half a mile to a mile. Then you can climb a tree and roost out of his reach till we come and call him off.”
 “But suppose she rejects you, and you should forget all about me?”
 “Oh, don’t go raising frivolous objections. Nothing of the kind will happen, and even if it does, I suppose he’ll starve to death in time.”

ALEX. RICKETTS.



IN DOUBT

HE—What if I should propose to you?
 SHE—You’d never do so again!

THE PROBLEM PLAY

By Douglas Story

EUSTACE CLAVERING is a big man—big in body, mind and reputation. An eminent K. C., one of the most impassioned pleaders at the Bar, a politician whose final resting place in Parliament must be greatly a matter of his own choosing, remarkably little advantage has been taken by his opponents of his early association with the stage and with stage folk.

Presumably this is in great part due to his own excessive candor on the subject and to his genuine personal popularity. For Eustace is still a young man as barristers go, a man whose pseudonym, "Eric Carstairs," was familiar to every man and woman in town, a dozen years ago, on the playbills of more than one successful production west of Temple Bar. In the late eighties he was the handsomest boy with the theatrical entrée in London, his comedies were the most promising. To-day the realities of life, as a criminal cross-examining counsel sees them, have strengthened his jaw, added keenness to his eye and deepened the music of his voice. But he is handsome as ever, desirable as ever—a man just approaching his prime.

The old bohemian days in Oak Tree Court are fresh in the memories of all but the youngest of a youthful generation. Yet are they never mentioned save in the company of those to whom their incidents are already as a tale that is told. For all men respect Eustace Clavering. Through it all he remained a man and a gentleman, and the Inns of Court rear few who do not eat of the Tree of Knowledge, and in the eating gain

such compensation as may be for their banishment from the Eden of Innocence.

The Winter was a depressing one. The demise of a sovereign—an event not previously encountered in the experience of the active generations—had left London in doubt as to whether it was in or out of town. In the general suspension of all things Clavering had an opportunity for introspection he had never previously encountered. To his astonishment he found himself thirty-eight and a bachelor—not a confirmed bachelor, because he had not yet attained the age of settled conviction, but an increasingly fastidious bachelor. The discovery distressed him, because he was essentially an admirer of women, and time was when he had been a lover of women—in the abstract.

In the first shock of the realization he cursed himself for his nicety. He had no ambition to become a cynic, and he had not suffered sufficiently at the hands of women to drive him in that direction. Yet all involuntarily he was drifting speedily to practical if not theoretical misogyny. Already he was hypercritical, quick to note immaterial anatomical inaccuracies, trivial discrepancies between complexion and stature, between avoirdupois and resonance of voice—trifles the healthy man knows not, or knowing, sees not. To argue himself unhealthy angered Clavering, so he rose and wandered out into the clear cold day.

The question was what to do with himself in the circumstances. He had lunched earlier than usual, the club offered no relief, and all the nice

people in town were suffering more or less from nerves at the uncertainty of the season. He hailed a hansom and ordered the driver to take him up Bond street. It would be hard if something on the pavement, in the crowded carriage-way or in the shops did not afford him inspiration.

And so it happened. At the first block he was attracted by a tall, willowy figure in soft gray that seemed a perfect oasis in the dreary wilderness of black. As she entered an art gallery he caught a glimpse of her face, and started. Hastily he pushed his fare through the trapdoor and leaped to the sidewalk. He found her in the vestibule consulting a catalogue. At sight of him her pale, strained face lightened, and their meeting was the meeting of old friends.

Ten years before Gracie Mainwaring had made his play at the Mayfair the success of a decade, had earned for herself an assured position at the top of the profession, and had endowed "Eric Carstairs" with the fortune and the reputation that had never since deserted him. But Clavering had never written another play, Gracie Mainwaring had retired from the boards, and after a bootless bellying the public had sullenly accepted the refusal of its favorites to dance longer to its piping.

Those who knew the identity of "Eric Carstairs" were too interested in the phenomenal rise of the barrister to trouble long over the sudden extinction of the dramatist. Those who sneered at his withdrawal from a profession in which he was a pronounced success were silenced by his greater triumph in a more dignified sphere. Such mystery as there might have been remained as inscrutable as in the beginning, while in the confident bearing of Eustace Clavering there was little encouragement for gossip.

Clavering's had been the first and the best of the problem plays. It had mesmerized the public by the bitterness of its cynicism, by the actuality of its tragedy, by the boldness

of its unbelief. It had shocked them by its realism and captivated them by its apparent inevitability. To Clavering the play had been the expression of a mood; to a generation it had been the exposition of a doctrine.

Gracie Mainwaring had been little more than nineteen when she accepted the heavy rôle at the Mayfair. When Clavering met her in Bond street she was on the confines of thirty. For nine years he had not seen her, for eight he had not heard from her or concerning her. She had gone to America, and the great arms of the United States had enveloped her.

They walked up the stairs together and stood in reverent contemplation of the picture of Gethsemane she had come to view. It was characteristic of the two, and of their old relationship, that they had spoken no word save the formal greeting, and that when her examination was finished she should place her hand trustingly in his and turn once more to the stairway.

Out in the light she drew her hand gently from him and led the way to her brougham waiting in Albemarle street. Clavering handed her in and then stood interrogatively.

"Tell him 'home,'" she said, speaking for the first time since she had welcomed him, "and come and have some tea, Eustace."

The footman touched his hat, and Clavering settled himself contentedly beside her. He knew he had come to the solution of the problem in his life, and he was satisfied to leave its announcement to time and to the beautiful woman at his side. They drove rapidly through the Park and stopped at a freshly decorated house near Lancaster Gate.

Over tea, the silence, which had never been embarrassing, was broken.

"Gracie," asked Clavering, "how ever did you get to town without my knowing it? Have you been long here?"

"No," returned the other with a silvery laugh that affected Clavering like a *leit motif* in Wagner; "no, I

arrived by the *Campania* on Wednesday, and this is the first time I've been out. If you were a woman you would know by this—"and she stroked the soft gray dress she wore—"that I am a recent arrival. Women don't risk *lèse-majesté* in gowns without a cause, you know."

"Thank heaven you did, or I might have missed you. It was the sight of the dove among the crows that drew me to you in Bond street. But how on earth do you come to be living here? I thought this was Max Weston's house?"

"I am Mrs. Max Weston."

There was silence for awhile between the two, and Clavering realized for the first time there was more than one solution possible to the problem of his life. He toyed with his cup and marveled at the calm self-possession of the woman opposite. She, on her part, watched him dreamily through the heavy curtain of her eyelashes.

"You have become a man, Eustace," she said at length, as if the remark summed up a whole volume of impressions.

"Yes? But I wasn't legally an infant when last we met, you know. But as regards one thing I was older then than now."

"And that is——?"

"Woman."

"That is everything."

"Almost thou persuadest me," he returned, with a lazy laugh.

Once more they drifted into silence, Clavering wondering why in his madness he had let this woman slip away from him, Mrs. Weston delighting in the signs of his strength and his manhood. It was he that spoke first:

"I wonder why the dramatist in me should be so painfully conventional. In those other days my sense of the dramatic proprieties kept me constantly a-gaze for settings. I tried to make love to appropriate music. I remember once there was a girl I loved—as young men love—and I determined to pledge my troth to her at the Temple fountain. You remember

the fountain, don't you?—the one Dickens wrote about in 'Oliver Twist,' isn't it?—where 'the idle drops of water danced and danced, and peeping out in sport among the trees plunged lightly down to hide themselves'—pardon me, the quotation jumps with the conventionality. As a matter of fact, in my time the control of the water was so eccentric the drops had little opportunity for dancing."

"Did Rebecca come to the fountain?"

"No, I regret to say. You see, the fountain is so thoroughly out of everybody's way, except of the law clerks and the American tourists, I fancy Rebecca remained ignorant of its whereabouts."

"But you had a philosophy in those days?"

"Yes, but my philosophy had a nasty habit of deserting me at critical moments."

"The dramatic proprieties, then?"

"Well, the dramatic proprieties got so far askew that I substituted an empty stage for Fountain Court, Middle Temple, a dark and dingy, hopelessly impossible trysting place with great, gaunt wings glowering at one like sentinels, and a moth-eaten back-cloth flapping uneasily on the rear wall. Ugh!"

"It *was* draughty," interpolated Mrs. Weston, reflectively.

"Very draughty," admitted Clavering.

"And depressing."

"Most depressing."

"And liable to interruptions."

"One of the stage hands dropped a block from the flies that came within six inches of permanently interrupting my terrestrial career."

"Why ever did you choose such a place?" asked Mrs. Weston, bending a sympathetic face toward him. "Was Rebecca so unapproachable elsewhere?"

"No, but she had come up to the theatre for her letters, and I was full of the new discovery of my own unworthiness—and Fountain Court was so far off—and it seemed desecration

to arrange for the speaking of the truth at the Star and Garter or the Savoy."

"Couldn't you have gone to the National Gallery? It was handy."

"Yes, handy, but not soul-satisfying. Good Lord, Gracie!" said Clavering, suddenly sitting up; "don't you realize I was in love—honest, maddening love—and I would have proposed on the sidewalk rather than waste time consulting a time-table? Think of proposing in the full gaze of a Botticelli Madonna!"

"True—disconcerting, and not fair to the girl. But why didn't you propose in the theatre?"

"Well, I was an honest young idiot in those days, and I wanted to tell her——"

"Rebecca?"

"Don't interrupt. I wanted to tell her that my play was a lie, a mean, back-handed blow at a woman I in my vanity had fancied deserved it; that my faith in woman was real, was actual; and I wanted to beg her to give me back the right to stand once more upright in the eyes of a gracious lady."

"And why didn't you?"

"Because she seemed more interested in her letters than in me, because I was young and vain, and hated to prick the bubble of my reputation, and because the stage carpenter's block fell and——"

"So you let her go without even telling her, without even asking her?"

"My gray hairs so do testify."

Mrs. Weston lay back quietly in the gathering gloom and contemplated her visitor. As the firelight played upon him it revealed a goodly man, well bred and clean cut, with honest eyes and a reliable mouth. And as she looked her face grew soft and girlish. She leaned forward in her chair toward him as if she would gather him to her breast, but her figure was hidden in the twilight.

"Eustace," she asked, and her voice was a caress, "Eustace, was it fair to the girl?"

Before Clavering had a chance to answer a man came in with lights, and Mrs. Weston rose.

"Eustace," she said, as she held out her hand, "come back to dinner this evening. I need your advice about many things."

As soon as Clavering had gone Mrs. Weston withdrew to her boudoir and in its soft, amber light contemplated the situation. For nine years she had kept away from London, had buried herself in Florida or Bermuda in Winter, in the Thousand Islands in Summer. She had returned with the fixed determination of meeting this man, and now that the encounter had taken place thus fortuitously she needed pause to estimate its effect.

A long time she sat silent and unmoving, with her sweet face perfect in its contentment. Her great gray eyes seemed black in the lamplight and her mobile mouth pouted as a girl's to be kissed. All of the hard lines of her girlhood's figure had softened, her face had taken on a character of its own and no longer was a mere reflection of what she represented. As an actress she had lost something of the quick adaptability that had made her fame. As a woman she had gained distinction.

It had been something of an ordeal to appraise a nine-year-old idol, but Eustace had emerged triumphant, and Gracie Weston sighed her satisfaction. A slight tap broke in on her musings and her maid announced the hour.

"All right, Louise, I shall be with you in a minute," and Mrs. Weston passed through to her dressing-room. Never in years had she been so exacting.

At dinner Eustace was judiciously brilliant, while Mrs. Weston chatted of old friends and the women who had gone under. Coffee was served in the drawing-room. When they were alone Clavering returned to the question his hostess had put to him earlier in the evening.

"Well, Gracie, was it fair to the girl?"

"What? You are playing with the problem—or the interruption?"

"The interruption."

"It was most unfair to her. It stopped her career; it made her doubt the man she had trusted; it drove her to marry a man it was defilement to touch; it made her an exile. Oh, I know it was an exile with a hundred thousand dollars a year, but that only makes estrangement the more emphatic."

"Augments the tortures of changing seasons, the tyrannies of bonnets at a distance?"

"No; multiplies one's capacity for heart-searching, for doubt."

"Why did the girl doubt? Whom did she doubt?"

"The girl doubted because the man had written a play everyone said was drawn from life—had made the woman in it vile, treacherous, faithless. And the girl remembered what his eyes had spoken to her, and she wondered if she, too, fell under the lash of his unbelief. Circumstances made it appear that she had, and she fled from the bitter solution of the dramatist."

"But, Gracie," cried Clavering, "surely you knew I was mad in my self-conceit, that my faith in woman's heart and woman's virtue was unsullied?"

"I knew, but you had not told me so; and so—" there was a catch in her throat—"and so I married Max. Eustace, it was cruel to leave me to such a fate unwarned, unprepared."

Eustace moved as if he would put his arms round her, but he restrained

himself. He was very white now and he breathed heavily.

"Gracie," he asked, when he could control himself, "Gracie, where is Max?"

"Dead!"

"Dead?"

"Yes, died of yellow fever—so at least the cable stated—in Rio six months ago."

They were both standing up now, gazing at each other with eyes through which their startled souls looked. The man spoke first.

"Gracie, can it still be comedy?"

And the girl sank into his arms with a murmur of love that stirred Eustace to his heart's depths. Later, when she was sobbing as a woman will for very happiness, he said:

"Gracie, there is a whole philosophy in those tears of yours."

"Yes, dear," whispered the girl, smiling up through shining lashes, "yes, but it is a philosophy that is never revealed to the philosopher." Then, moving away from him, she questioned: "But, Eustace, what about the dramatic propriety now?"

"Oh, there is none," he answered, as he drew her to him again; "we have sacrificed all the drama there ever was in it. We have made a comedy of what should have been a tragedy—or at least a problem play. And there can be no propriety in a bachelor and a girl-widow together without a chaperon in Mayfair; can there, darling?"

And he clasped her once more to his heart.



CONSOLATION

OH, woman, do not lose your wonted cheer
 When three gray hairs upon your head appear;
 A word of consolation I'll let fall—
 Can they be counted, they don't count at all.

GEORGE BIRDSEYE.

POLISHED BARBARISM

THERE once was a gallant young Sioux
 Whioux thousands of enemies slioux
 In a barbarous way,
 Till I'm happy to say
 He longed for a change from the strife and affray,
 And I truly can't blame him, can yioux?

So this gallant, progressive young Sioux
 A great bushy head of hair grioux;
 Went down to Carlisle,
 Played football awhisle,
 And learned to slay folks in an elegant stisle,
 Just as civilized warriors dioux!

LOWELL OTUS REESE.



THE WHIRL OF A GIRL

SHE leaned back in her chair with a weary though contented sigh. This had been such a busy day, she thought. In the morning she had had a protracted siege with her dressmaker over a creation in pale blue satin, that was to gladden the eyes of all observers at the largest ball of the season. After a dainty luncheon at Delmonico's she had gone with Jack to look at the new span he thought of buying, and had agreed with him as to the perfect match of the glossy brown steeds. Then Jack and she had driven downtown, and she had dropped him at his club while she went to take her fencing lesson. After that she had made a call or two, and then hurried home to dress for the dinner the family was giving that evening. Everything had gone off perfectly—the new cook was very satisfactory—and later they had looked in on the last act of "L'Aiglon." How magnificently Bernhardt played! And after that she had gone on to the Stuyvesant ball and had danced until her cheeks were as pink as the roses she carried. And now she was sitting before her large mirror, wrapped in a wonderful fluffy robe of softest white, and in a moment the maid would—

"Mary Jane! Mary Jane! Come right here this minute and set the table for supper!"

The girl rose and glanced down at her blue-checked calico gown.

"Yes, ma," she said.

RUTH H. DUTCHER.



IRRESPONSIBLE AND RECKLESS

HEWITT—Do you ever go home drunk?

JEWETT—My dear boy, when I'm drunk I'm liable to go anywhere.

FATE'S FOOTBALL

By Rupert Hughes

IF sweet little Polly Paddington had lived in Roman days she would have gurgled with delight every time a gladiator tumbled in the sand red with his own blood, and her tiny thumb would have been the first turned down in merciless contempt for the crime of inferiority. But having been born only sweet-and-twenty years ago, and in New Haven, she spends her enthusiasm on football.

However, this year brought her the first chance she had ever had to know a real, live football player—so little communion has town with gown in New Haven. Wherefore Polly proceeded to take an even greater interest in the game, and to fall in love, or nearly, with a demigod whose emblem of power was an oblate spheroid of pigskin.

Yet even he, the one gladiator she knew, was not a really-truly football player; he was not a 'Varsity, but only a would-be, a Scrub! Still, he was better than nothing, and she believed that she loved him. When he called on her of an evening, and, walking in with a limp, flopped into a chair with a groan, she sat at his feet and listened to his jargon of technical terms with an enthusiasm that hallowed what it comprehended, and a faith that accepted on trust what it did not understand.

No hero, however bold, could have looked into her great, hungry eyes and told an unvarnished tale; and the poor, hard-working, hard-worked Scrub could not be blamed for dressing up his experiences with a few inventions of prowess that he had not shown, and brilliant runs that he had not made.

To spend a day as the human football of a gang of eleven educated ruffians, who cuffed and tripped and dragged and slammed you all up and down and across a large field, and then to spend an evening confessing to a pretty girl just how ridiculous and pathetic a figure you have been cutting—that is more than you would expect even of yourself, isn't it? And this poor, hopeful Scrub was not made of any sterner stuff than you. And when it came to the alternative of winning the smiles of this girl by lying, or losing them by telling the truth, why, the Scrub did just as you would have done, he simply turned himself loose and lied.

The love affair of these two prospered so rapidly that before the first actual contest of the year the Scrub—Jack Kendall was his name—was sufficiently encouraged to risk a proposal. But now his boasting brought its own revenge, for Polly frankly averred that any squire of hers must be an approved expert in football, and must win her heart in actual combat before her very eyes.

It happened that the Scrub had been recently playing in remarkable form—for him. He knew that his style must have improved by the comparative immunity he had enjoyed from the objurgations of the coaches, though their profanity was still such as would have curled the hair of a layman. Then he overheard one of the coaches say to Higginbotham, of the 'Varsity:

"If you don't settle down and quit your monkey business you'll wake up some fine day to find yourself on the Scrub again. We are thinking of giving Kendall a whack at your sinecure."

He's a good deal of a muff, but he works hard, and——"

That was all he could catch, but it encouraged him so much that he made bold to ask permission for the attendance of Miss Paddington and her mother at one of the tuning-up games between the 'Varsity and the Scrub. No objection was made, and Polly toddled into the grounds, followed by her mother, who had been induced to come only by the daughter's threat to go alone rather than miss this test of her hero's mettle.

Foreseeing how difficult it might be to recognize him in all the harness of football masquerade, Kendall had told Polly that he played left end on the Scrub; he had carefully mapped out the field, so that she could know where to look for him; and had added, with ominous scorn, the statement that the man opposite him, playing right-end on the other team, was the hated Higginbotham, who alone stood in the way of his promotion to the 'Varsity, and whom he purposed that day to annihilate.

There were not many people in the grand stand that afternoon, and Polly found a seat in the very first row, where she could watch the turmoil closely. A look of religious awe came into her gentle eyes when the teams made a sortie from their quarters, and, after a little skylarking, lined up for the kick-off. She finally located the position of left-end and fastened all her gaze and all her prayers on the man there.

She was glad that Jack had made it all very plain to her, for she could never have recognized him in the disguise affected by football brigands. A black nose-guard, a pair of ear-shields and sundry fillets about the head may disguise the natural beauty of even an Adonis. Furthermore, Polly was surprised to note how much taller and heavier Jack appeared than she had expected. But then those padded suits always make one seem larger.

In the very first scrimmage the youth who carried all her hope and pride with him distinguished himself

by being the last of the Scrubs to rise from the heap of human odds and ends into which the two bands of culture had formed themselves. But under her beloved was yet another gasping wretch — Higginbotham, doubtless. Seeing him wobbling about and re-adjusting his joints, Polly screamed with ecstasy.

But a greater joy awaited her, for the right-end of the 'Varsity got the ball, with instructions to deliver it to Mr. Goal at the other end of the field. He hugged it tightly as if it were his own heart, and leaped forward. But he could not dodge the alert Scrub—her hero—who ran the 'Varsity man almost over the side-line, and then taking him round the hips, picked him up like a bolster, banged him to the ground with a jar that shook the earth, and pounced down on him in a manner to give beholders gooseflesh. Polly's cheer took no heed of the inconvenience this maneuver must have caused the 'Varsity man; he was legitimate prey to her hero's glory. When he struck the ground the word "Down!" was blurted out of him like water from a hot-water bag. At the same time his nose-guard was jolted loose, and for a moment Polly would have sworn that the wild face she saw belonged to her hero. But the memory of his words that he was to play on the Scrub reassured her.

When her favorite in the contest got the ball and dived head foremost into the 'Varsity man opposite him, bowled him down like a ninepin and went on over him for a beautiful run of twenty yards, she crowed like a baby and yowled like one of Wagner's Valkyries. And when the captain of the 'Varsity came back to the prostrate wretch who had let the Scrub through and heaped sky-blue condemnation on him, she felt not the least tinge of pity.

To increase her pride, a man in the seat behind began to echo her views of the two rivals on the end of the teams; and by his talk he made it plain to everyone within earshot that he was a former coach.

"Why, that 'Varsity right-end," he

growled, "ought to be playing on the Vassar team; the Scrub in front of him isn't doing a thing to him! That idiot will never reach 'Varsity form in his life. He's a natural born lobster, a hopeless farmer. He ought to be shoveling smoke off the icebergs—anything but this. He might succeed as a player of tiddlediwinks, but of football—not in a thousand years!"

Such choice epigrams as these were to her beautiful epitaphs on the doomed Higginbotham, and while it seemed that the Scrub man was determined to chew the helpless 'Varsity man up entirely, and while the game was stopped every few downs to rub and yank and patch the 'Varsity man into a condition where he could stand on his feet and furnish a target for the Scrub, the performance did not strike the coy demoiselle as in any sense too violent. Her mother, however, was horrified to the verge of hysterics, and being unable to persuade her bloodthirsty child to leave the scene of carnage, she finally chose an opportune moment to faint, the special excuse being the complete collapse of the 'Varsity man and his transportation in an unconscious condition to the training quarters.

There was a mighty stir in the grand stand then, and the voluble ex-coach had to expend his breath in carrying the inanimate and portly matron to her carriage outside. But Polly was disgusted only at the necessity of going home. She looked on the victim of her hero's vigor with all the stoicism of a squaw inspecting her buck's collection of scalps.

When she reached home and had her mother placed in the care of a doctor, her newly matured love impelled her irresistibly to write a letter of homage to her dauntless warrior. And she despatched to him this missive:

DARLING JACK (*for you are my darling now, and I confess it*):

Oh, *how* can I ever tell you how *proud* I was of your *magnificent* courage and power on the field of battle to-day! My eyes *never* left you! I recognized you *immediately*, and you looked *awfully grand* in your suit of armor! The 'Var-

sity idiot opposite you—Higginbotham it was, I *suppose*—looked too *puny* and *ridiculous* for anything! I shrieked with delight every time you downed him. And oh, Jack, how you *did* down him! But I don't feel the *least bit sorry* for him! He has no more right to be on the team than I have. You made him look, as my young brother says, like a dime with a hole in it! I couldn't stay *half* as long as I wanted to, for mamma was *selfish* enough to faint *just* because that *silly* Higginbotham was carried off *senseless*! He was senseless in the *first* place, and I was glad you laid him out! Oh, Jack, after seeing you play the *game of games* to-day, I no longer have any doubt that you are the man I can love *devotedly*! I could never be happy with a man I could not *respect*, a man like Higginbotham! So come and see me as soon as *ever* you can, for I am

All your *own*, OWN, OWN

POLLY.

P. S.—I shall be SO proud when I can see you wearing your "Y."

To the feverishly impatient Polly came, a while later, not her lover, but this note in a strange handwriting:

MY DEAR MISS PADDINGTON:

Being Mr. Kendall's best friend, I had the unpleasant task of reading him your note as soon as he regained consciousness. As both his eyes were closed in the practice game he could not read it. And as he can hardly move a muscle without yelling, and cannot hold a pen in his hand, I have to inform you that he cannot accept your kind invitation to call for some days. I may say to you that the man you took to be Higginbotham was in reality Mr. Kendall, and *vice versa*. It was decided at the last moment that Mr. Kendall should be given a trial on the 'Varsity, and he exchanged temporarily with Mr. Higginbotham, who, in his natural desire to show that Mr. Kendall was not his superior as a player, conducted himself with unpardonable rudeness.

Yours sincerely,

L. JOHN DE SMYTHE.

P. S.—Mr. Kendall wishes me to ask you whether the knowledge of the mistake you made in thinking him to be Mr. H., and *vice versa*, will make any difference in your very cordial expressions of affection and acceptance.

L. JOHN DE S.

Did it?

THE FAMILY TREE

A BRAND-NEW family tree adorns
The home of Cræsus Pickles;
With tales of titled ancestors
His fawning friends he tickles.

To all the world that tree proclaims
Descent from lord and lady.
Betwixt the branches and the ground
Of course it's rather shady.

JOSEPHINE COAN.



COMMON MISFORTUNE

WILLIS—No man knows himself.

WALLACE—That's so; but unfortunately he is acquainted with people
who do know him.



KNOWLEDGE NECESSARILY LIMITED

MRS. HENPECK—Are all humorists sad?

MR. HENPECK—I don't know, my dear; I never met one that was
single.



AN APPEAL FOR MERCY

JUDGE—Have you anything to say why sentence should not be passed
on you?

BIGAMIST—Just think of my families, judge.



CURED HIS FAITH

"I'VE lost my faith in the Faith Curists."

"What was the matter with you?"

"Nothing."